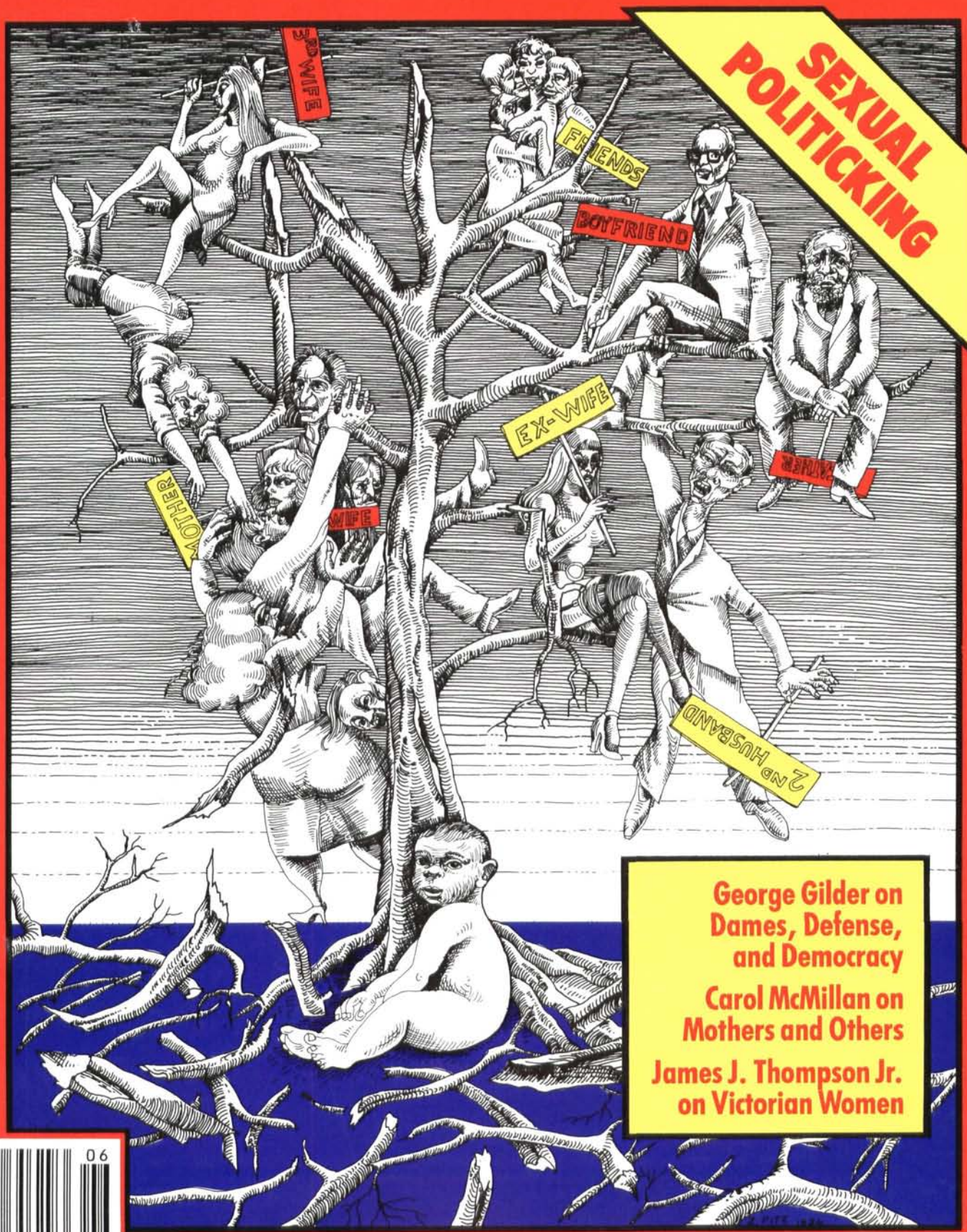
e 1986

$1.50

Chronicles

A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE



George Gilder on Dames, Defense, and Democracy

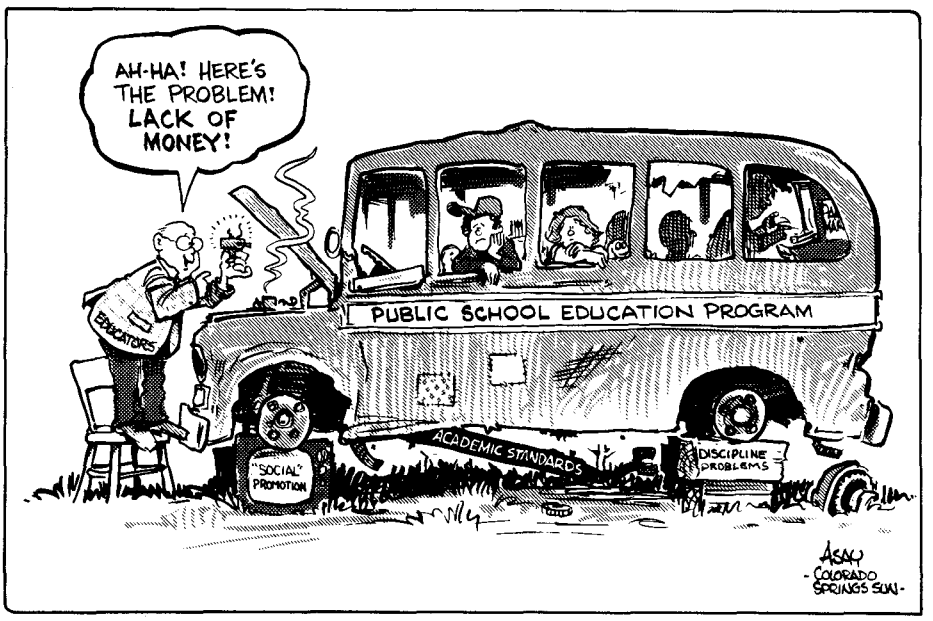
Carol McMillan on Mothers and Others

James J. Thompson Jr. on Victorian Women

06
73361 64629 3

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

S.O.S.: Saving Our Schools



Imagine what would happen if teachers made the following demands and refused to teach until they were met.

We do not wish to teach children who do not wish to be taught. The presence of disruptive or even indifferent students penalizes those who are eager to learn.

We expect no student to be promoted until he is sufficiently prepared for the next grade. "Social promotion" places the unprepared student at greater disadvantage each succeeding year. This practice is, therefore, not only dishonest, but cruel.

We expect to be regularly evaluated by our students, fellow teachers, and administrators. And we demand to be paid and promoted on the basis of merit as determined by those evaluations. In the interests of improving our skills as teachers, we deserve to be informed of our strengths and weaknesses. We then should be rewarded on the basis of our progress and ability. Equal pay for unequal work is unjust and it encourages mediocrity.

Finally, we insist that teacher training be rigorous and that certification and subsequent promotion be based on competence. We desire professional status and the respect of the community. This can only be achieved by maintaining the highest professional standards.

Teaching is no picnic. And the list of teacher grievances could be long and demanding without ever mentioning money.

But when was the last time you heard of teachers striking on behalf of a return to discipline, quality, and accountability in education?

1844
HILLSDALE COLLEGE
For a set of 36 of these short, informative essays, send $10.00 to "Alternatives", Hillsdale College, Hillsdale, Michigan 49242

©HILLSDALE COLLEGE, HILLSDALE MICHIGAN

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The most important anti-Communist work ever written — now abridged for easier reading

How often does an author applaud when his magnum opus is abridged? Yet Alexander Solzhenitsyn thinks so well of this abridgment that he contributes a Foreword, in which he writes:

> "I gratefully accepted Professor Ericson's suggestion to create a one-volume abridgment of my three-volume work, *The Gulag Archipelago*, in order to facilitate its reading for those who do not have much time in this hectic century of ours. I thank Professor Ericson for his generous initiative as well as for the tactfulness, the literary taste, and the understanding of Western readers which he displayed during the work on the abridgment."

Wrote White House Communications Chief Patrick Buchanan awhile back: Solzhenitsyn is "a human diamond, made hard by the crushing weight of Stalin's monstrous regime, a prophet sent to the West as a final warning." Well put — yet how many of us have been scared away, until this abridgment, by the huge size of the three original volumes? How many high school and college youngsters have passed this great teacher by?

No longer need we deny ourselves the one ESSENTIAL book on Communism. Professor Ericson has put the world in his debt.

Praise for the original volumes of this "extraordinary epic"

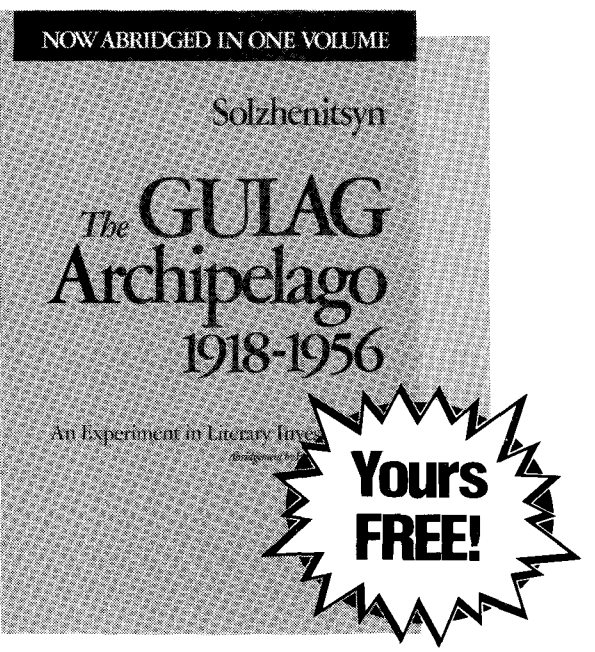
"Surely among the few gigantic literary achievements of this age . . . The idea that this volume can pass for an ordinary book in this age of too many books is . . . laughable, ludicrous."—*Washington Post*

"Powerful."—George Will

"No one who reads through its many blood-stained pages can ever be quite the same again . . . Leaves a permanent scar on the reader's soul."—*New York Times*

"A work of prophecy."—*Christian Science Monitor*

"Reads as if written in letters of fire . . . We should be more terrified than we are."—*Esquire*



How to get this $25 giant FREE

495 pages — the essence of the original work of over 1,800 pages • 4 pages of maps depict the whole sweep of the Soviet slave camps • 31 revealing photographs (most of them obviously smuggled out) • Foreword and Afterword by Solzhenitsyn himself

How the Club Works

Every 4 weeks (13 times a year) you get a free copy of the Club Bulletin which offers you the Featured Selection plus a good choice of Alternates — all of interest to conservatives. ★ If you want the Featured Selection, do nothing; it will come automatically. ★ If you don't want the Featured Selection, or you do want an Alternate, indicate your wishes on the handy card enclosed with your Bulletin and return it by the deadline date. ★ The majority of Club books will be offered at 20-50% discounts, plus a charge for shipping and handling. ★ As soon as you buy and pay for 3 books at regular Club prices, your membership may be ended at any time, either by you or by the Club. ★ If you ever receive a Featured Selection without having had 10 days to decide if you want it, you may return it at Club expense for full credit. ★ Good service. No computers! ★ The Club will offer regular Superbargains, mostly at 70-95% discounts plus shipping and handling. Superbargains do NOT count toward fulfilling your Club obligation, but do enable you to buy fine books at giveaway prices. ★ Only one membership per household.

CONSERVATIVE BOOK CLUB

15 OAKLAND AVENUE • HARRISON, NY 10528

Please accept my membership in the Club and send FREE my one-volume abridgment of the three volumes of Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago 1918-1956*. I agree to buy 3 additional books at regular Club prices over the next 18 months. I also agree to the Club rules spelled out in the coupon. **ccul 10**

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Chronicles
A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

Vol. 10, No. 6, June 1986

SEXUAL POLITICKING

A Publication of
The Rockford Institute:
John A. Howard, President

Editor
Thomas Fleming

Associate Editor
Bryce Christensen

Copy Editor
Cynthia Calvert

Poetry Editor
Andrei Navrozov

Contributing Editors
Ronald Berman
Harold O.J. Brown
Odie Faulk
David Kaufman
E. Christian Kopff
John Shelton Reed
Joseph Schwartz

Editorial Secretary
LeAnn Manning

Publisher
Richard A. Vaughan

Art Director and
Production Manager
Barbara De Witz

Composition Manager
Anita Fedora

Circulation Director
Theresa Domanski

On the Cover

Illustration on the cover and throughout the text by Zbigniew and Emilia Fitz.

CHRONICLES (ISSN 0163-1187) is published monthy for $18 per year by The Rockford Institute, 934 North Main Street, Rockford, IL 61103-7061. Second-class postage paid at Rockford, IL and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *CHRONICLES*, P.O. Box 800, Mount Morris, IL 61054.

Editorial and Advertising Offices: 934 North Main Street, Rockford, IL 61103. Editorial Phone: (815) 964-5054. Advertising Phone: (815) 964-5811. Subscription Department: P.O. Box 800, Mount Morris, IL 61054.

U.S.A. Newsstand Distribution by Eastern News Distributors, Inc., 1130 Cleveland Road, Sandusky, OH 44870.

Copyright © 1986 by The Rockford Institute. All rights reserved.

CONTENTS

CULTURAL REVOLUTIONS

Downhill all the way with the Oscars, government gambling, and German beer; while Brown students take to the streets and take to streetwalking. 6

PERSPECTIVE

Old Adam, New Eve 8

Lies, damn lies, and feminist scholarship.

by Thomas Fleming

VIEWS

Sexual Politics 10

A new Jeanne d'Arc defends the NRA from the ERA.

by George Gilder

OPINIONS

Shotgun Marriage 16

—*Reflections on Gender and Science* by Evelyn Fox Keller
—*Mothers and Such: Views of American Women and Why They Changed* by Maxine L. Margolis
—*Mother Care/Other Care* by Sandra Scarr

Feminists are setting women free at last from the slavery of sex and birth.

by Carol McMillan

Out on a Limb 18

—*Stanley and the Women* by Kingsley Amis

Lucky Jim has met the enemy, and they is she.

by Thomas P. McDonnell

Love and Death in the American West 22

—*The Real American Cowboy* by Jack Weston
—*Daughters of Joy, Sisters of Misery: Prostitutes in the American West, 1865-90* by Anne M. Butler

A discouraging word from a home on the range.

by Odie B. Faulk

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Gelded Age 24

—*Boys Together: English Public Schools, 1800-1864* by John Chandos
—*Manhood: A New Definition* by Stephen A. Shapiro
—*The Redundant Male: Is Sex Irrelevant in the Modern World?* by Jeremy Cherfas and John Gribbin

Defending the last endangered species—men.

by Allan C. Carlson

Lady and the Vamp 26

—*Growing Up in the 1850s: The Journal of Agnes Lee*, edited by Mary Custis Lee deButts
—*Marthe*, translated by Donald M. Frame

The significant lives of insignificant women—consummate devotion and devoted consummation.

by James J. Thompson Jr.

VITAL SIGNS

SCREEN

Material Wealth and Spiritual Poverty: *Down and Out in Beverly Hills* reviewed by Sam Karnick 37

MUSIC

Train of Fools: *The First Rock & Roll Confidential Report* reviewed by Janet Scott Barlow 38

CORRESPONDENCE

Letter From the Lower Right by John Shelton Reed 40

Letter From the Heartland by Jane Greer 41

TYPEFACES

The Man of Mode 43

Back in vogue, the new *Esquire* is still the *Vogue* for men.

POLEMICS & EXCHANGES

On "After the Big Bang" by David B. Meltz 47
Mr. Christensen Replies
On "Academic Freedom" by Thomas R. Nassissi

BOOKSHELVES

COMMENDABLES

Companion to Coleridge: Andrew Shaughnessy on *A Portrait of Charles Lamb* 30

Pedantry and Progress: *Basil Lanneau Gildersleeve: An American Classicist*

Getting America Right: *The Source; Winter Oysters; Poems From the Sangamon; The New World; The Unlovely Child* 31

IN FOCUS

Stage Props & Program Notes: Raymond J. Pentzell on *The Plays of Eugene O'Neill: A New Assessment* 33

An Untimely End: *Family and Nation* 34

The Eyes of Adam: Carl C. Curtis on *Giacometti: A Biography*

Selling Out the Kids: Edward D. Snow Jr. on *Pricing the Priceless Child: The Changing Social Value of Children* 35

Walden Pond Socialists: Herbert London on *An Environmental Agenda for the Future* 36

DEPARTMENTS

REVISIONS

Holely Matrimony: *The Divorce Revolution: The Unexpected Social and Economic Consequences for Women and Children in America; Mothers on Trial: The Battle for Children and Custody* 20

Woman's Place: *Georg Simmel: On Women, Sexuality, and Love* 38

Sexual Desire: *Sexual Desire: A Moral Philosophy of the Erotic* 42

Home Economics: *A Treatise on the Family* 46

POETRY

The Muse by Monk Gibbon 27

BOOKS IN BRIEF 23, 36, 44

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Oscar would have appealed to Lord Melbourne. Like the Order of the Garter, it "has no demn'd merit about it." The rest of us have problems. The more prestigious awards, for best actor or director or movie, are unpredictably awarded on the basis of popularity (popularity in Hollywood, that is, not at the box office), lifetime achievement, and relevance to "popular" (i.e., elite) causes. The losers are as interesting as the winners: Bob Hope never won nor did Fred Astaire, Clint Eastwood, or Paul Newman. (A six-time loser, Newman received a humiliating Lifetime Achievement Award at the most recent ceremony, with a composer who has lost 15 times.) John Wayne won for a mediocre movie, *True Grit*, when his best parts were behind him. John Ford never won for a Western, and two of his winners, *The Grapes of Wrath* and *The Informer*, were untypically leftist.

Usually I have some feeling for the likely winners in the major categories. This year I did not have a clue, and neither did the media. We were confused by the mediocrity of the nominees and the absence of this year's most popular money-makers: Stallone was passed over, and such films as *Back to the Future* received only token nominations, although Christopher Lloyd was clearly this year's Best Supporting Actor.

A battle between Sidney Pollack's *Out of Africa* and Steven Spielberg's *The Color Purple* seemed to be in the offing, with each movie receiving 11 Academy nominations. Pollack had beautiful photography and Meryl Streep on his side; Spielberg had the sympathy of those who felt that his money-makers had been unfairly ignored by the Hollywood establishment. Spielberg was not even nominated for Best Director, but his film's serious nature—made, like *Out of Africa*, from a prestigious novel—seemed to be in its favor.

Both movies, for all their attractive cinematic virtues, were morally offensive. *Out of Africa* follows a promiscuous Danish woman fleeing to Africa to escape the failure of her personal life at home, only to compound her failure in love with failure in business. Streep has been attending the Larry Olivier School for Ridiculous Accents, and her self-pity is near comic. She discovers that promiscuity leads to venereal disease and that men who sleep with you do not marry you. Socrates could teach a slave the Pythagorean theorem, but nobody can teach some girls. *The Color Purple* was worse. One friend observed that if you liked D.W. Griffith's film version of the *Klansman*, you would love *The Color Purple*. The comment seems malapropos. *Birth of a Nation* is certainly pro-American, and even pro-white, but this movie, faithful here to the book, is antiwhite, antimale, antiauthority, antitradition. We are left with mawkish religiosity and lesbian sex.

So the academy voted for sentimental favorites. Geraldine Page had been nominated seven times before, and she did appear in a low-key success, *A Trip to Bountiful*, made from a Horton Foote script, like Robert Duvall's Oscar-winning performance in *Tender Mercies*. Don Ameche had never been nominated before, but he is a swell fellow, and he was fun to watch in Ron Howard's *Cocoon*, although no more so than Hume Cronyn. Anjelica Huston is part of a grand Hollywood dynasty, going back to granddad Walter and dad John, although her performance in *Prizzi's Honor* was devoted to a singularly unsympathetic character. John Hurt has long deserved an Oscar and received one for his performance in *Kiss of the Spider Woman*, one of those typically unwatchable foreign films that Roger and Gene love to rave about. Pollack got Best Director and Best Movie, and he deserved the first. Spielberg, in spite of the groundswell of sympathy for him reported in the newspapers, received nothing.

Two observations. Every major award went to one of the Hollywood in-crowd, some of them deserving, some not. Increasingly, the most popular movies are being made by those who do not belong: Stallone, Eastwood, Chuck Norris, Spielberg, Lucas, Schwarzenegger, even Barbra Streisand. Giving awards to the Friends of the Friends while ignoring the wishes of the American public seems no way to maintain the audiences that Hollywood claims that it wants. TV audiences for the Oscars are down each year and no wonder. The movies that people have seen are not even nominated.

The ethos of the films that won was wide-ranging. Any script by Horton Foote will be of high quality, as literature and as ethics. Ron Howard has mastered the touch of dancing lightly around themes of great seriousness. *Cocoon* exemplified this with old age and death. But the rest. *The Color Purple* was an insult to nine-tenths of the normal people in America, and a good two-thirds of the perverts. *Out of Africa* parlayed the silliest 60's superstition: that you can fulfill yourself by running away from your own country and culture and every country's sexual mores. It made Isak Dinesen sterile; it killed Sylvia Plath. It is boring to find grown-ups still mouthing this stupid lie. John Hurt played a homosexual in jail with a leftist. Anjelica Huston played a crazed slut who sleeps around to aggravate her folks and ends up getting people murdered to satiate her sexual jealousy.

Now look at the movies that were passed over. Both Rambo and Rocky loved their country and were loyal to their buddies. Christopher Lloyd's mad doctor was delightfully kooky and creative; Michael J. Fox's embarrassed reactions in a risque situation were as normal as they were funny. *Witness* showed us people trying hard to maintain decency and family in our modern world.

The Hollywood in-crowd, having lost touch with the mainstream American feelings and instincts, can be aroused to enthusiasm only by weirdness. It cannot even tell the good from the bad anymore and just votes for its

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

old buddies. There are worse things. Friendship, after all, is a virtue. But friendship alone cannot save the industry from its doldrums. Only a commitment to excellence in art and the normal in ethics can do that. The last Oscar show had a message. I wonder if anybody was listening. (ECK)

Politicians and gangsters may soon be as difficult to tell apart in Midwestern statehouses as they are in Washington. Last January, we lamented Iowa's decision to join Illinois on the dishonor roll of states sponsoring a lottery.

Now Wisconsin legislators want their turn to disgrace themselves. Recently, both houses of the Wisconsin legislature took the first steps to amend the state Constitution, which has for 138 years banned all forms of gambling, and open the door for both a state lottery and for pari-mutuel horse betting. Frankly, we're rather fond of the old version of our northern neighbor, where Holsteins and Jerseys—not expensive horseflesh—are the cattle of choice. But a majority of Wisconsin's current legislators support the change. Most offer no arguments for legalized gambling except its apparent popularity. "The people in my district have overwhelmingly—68 percent—endorsed a lottery," said one state lawmaker. Voters willing to take a chance on a legislator whose moral principles ride on 18 percentage points will probably bet on anything.

Wisconsin lawmakers who have studied the issues as well as the polls see things differently. Rep. Robert Travis recently attacked the lottery proposal as "probably the easiest way to tax poor people I have seen. . . . I hate the bill. I think it is an embarrassment." In conversation with *Chronicles*, Travis' aide, Daniel Young, noted that opponents of the measure (from both parties) fear that the lottery will "create a need for more social assistance" and "lead to more alcoholism and domestic abuse." But while Rep. Travis continues Wisconsin's fine tradition of Republicans who care about the poor, many Republicans are lining up with Democrats on the gambling initiatives. Oddsmakers in Madison are giving 9 to 5 that if the constitutional amendment does finally pass, the grave of Bob LaFollette will become an epicenter.

The good people in Wisconsin might take a look at the Prairie State, where years of exposure to the state lottery has apparently softened the morals of private schools, charitable organizations, and (yes) even churches who are now petitioning the state legislature to legalize "Las Vegas Nights" as fund-raisers for their institutions. Turning Peoria's First Methodist into Little Vegas might help Illinois Governor "Big Jim" Thompson win reelection. A whole campaign strategy could be devised around the slogan "Turn away from sin—come to church and win."

As an excuse for state-run gambling, some Wisconsin lawmakers point to the need for property-tax relief and for more money for education. Given the state of public schools, perhaps the lottery *is* an appropriate way to raise money: both propositions are now long shots. An even more dubious rationale for state-run gambling was put forward by a lobbyist for Wisconsin's Horse Council: "[Gambling] is an industry that's going to provide jobs for 4,000 or 5,000 people." In Illinois, the gaming bureaucracy alone has become a major employer: the lottery is now an independent "cabinet-level" department. It's comforting to know that when the Japanese, Koreans, and Brazilians make all our steel, cars, clothing, and radios, Americans will still be able to find work running the numbers for state governments in the American heartland.

German beer may become the latest casualty of misguided internationalism. Ever since the decree of Duke William IV of Bavaria (1516), there has been a German law on what constitutes "real ale": pure malt, hops, yeast, and water. While other countries (including the U.S.) try to palm off various combinations of noxious chemicals as the real thing, the German Federal Republic as recently as 1983 declared that all beer marketed in the GFR has to meet the standards of 1516. But the chemical beer processors of the European Economic Community have cried foul and complain Germany is illegally acting in restraint of trade. First the Genocide Convention, now this. Someday, when we're all on trial at the Hague for opposing unrestricted immigration, we won't even be able to console ourselves with an honest bottle of beer. The new economic order! First they poison our minds, then they destroy our palates.

Prostitution and posturing are the current campus rage in the Ivy League. A few months ago, when undercover police investigators arrested two Brown University coeds for prostitution, campus organizers of a special antiapartheid fast were crestfallen: the sex arrests diverted media attention away from their righteous cause. The coincidence of the two events was, in fact, appropriate. Morality on the college campus has become largely a matter of public poses and news events. The schools long ago gave up their claim to act *in loco parentis*. In an interview with *U.S. News & World Report*, James Billington remarked recently on the strange disjunction between the highly public moralism of popular campus causes and the "complete self-indulgence on immediate, personal issues." College students prove their virtue by building illegal shantytowns on campus greens or by marching in protests against America's Central American policies. What does it matter, when they're sleeping around, whether it is for fun or profit?

It would do no good to send the little harlots to church. Many pastors in main-line churches are so busy holding press conferences and denouncing the Administration, they just don't have time to give sermons on the seven deadly sins. At *Christianity and Crisis* (a publication enjoying cozy relations with the National Council of Churches) clerical contributors alternate between bashing the State Department for oppressing the Sandinistas and celebrating the moral courage of New York prostitutes and San Francisco homosexuals.

The answer to all this—teenage pregnancy, the AIDS "epidemic," child abuse, etc.—is supposed to be education. Not only more of it but of a more progressive kind. But if the kids at *Brown* don't know how to be sensitive and caring and socially aware, they have a right to demand their money back.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

OLD ADAM, NEW EVE *by Thomas Fleming*

Feminist writers sometimes give us the impression that the nonworking mother is a rare bird like the Bachman's Warbler—sighted (not very reliably) once a decade or so in a corner of I'on Swamp in the South Carolina low country. The ladies magazines do occasionally report on rumors that some professional women like Janet Fallows have taken a few years off to be with their children until they're old enough for playschool. But these cases almost always involve eccentrics or writers—a species that will do anything so long as it makes good copy. In the old days, writers went to exotic places and paid for the trip by writing articles. Now, the really exotic thing to do is to fix dinner and change diapers on a regular basis.

To show how out of touch some of us are, I know very few mothers of small children who actually hold regular jobs. Of course, I know one who is a "novelist" and countless numbers who get involved in arts councils, church rummage sales, and substitute teaching. Some even do crafts for an hourly "wage" that no sweatshop in Los Angeles would dare to pay illegal Mexicans. In the case of the one or two mothers who actually want to work, they appear to be equally miserable at home and at work.

Obviously, many mothers of small children do work, some of them because they have to, more of them because they feel they really ought to. The strong social pressures on women to pretend they're men is just a small part of what the women's movement has contributed to our common life. But why is it that the women I meet are so unlike the women I read about in books? Now I have, it is true, passed most of my days in the Midwest and deep South, where men and women are too ignorant or too poor to live out the fantasies of night-time soap operas and women's fiction. From the number of novels being written by the women, for the women, and of the women, I am beginning to wonder if men have given up the genre. To save our readers the effort of ploughing through these books, I offer this brief sketch, Feminist Novel Prototype I:

Darla has always known she was different, even when she was growing up in the affluent suburbs of _____. She discovered sex at the age of 12, drugs by 14, radical politics by 17. After four years of brilliant underachievement at Barnard or Wellesley, she married Ted, who shared her literary interests. As the story opens, she has just decided to leave Ted (now an advertising exec) and their two small children in order to escape from the Doll's House and reclaim her soul. After a few episodes of pointless (and therefore thrilling) sex, she realizes that men are only after one thing (what Mamma forgot to tell her). Disenchanted with the first stages of sexual liberation, she checks into a radical lesbian commune, where the conversation alternates between what's wrong with men and all you never wanted to know about feminine hygiene. In the end, she leaves her alternate life-style behind—although she'll always be grateful for what it has taught her about herself—and we see, on the last page, the new woman bravely facing an uncertain future as the screendoor is blown endlessly open and shut by the wind. Or maybe she's watching the lights going on along El Camino Real after spending two years in the Barrio soothing the anxieties of illegal immigrants—you fill in the blanks. In these write-by-number plots, there is some flexibility in the details (aspiring novelists should feel free to use the Prototype without paying any royalties).

Fiction is only a small part of the feminist influence on our high culture. There are feminist enclaves in physiology, psychology, sociology, "education," literary theory, history—everything, in short, except math and physics, which effectively screen out women stupid enough to fall for the feminist line.

In the past few years alone, countless books and articles have been written to debunk the old sexist stereotypes. A prudent man would have avoided all but one or two of the best, but in this area there is no best, no better, not even a good. What sort of sociology or psychology or neurology is it that knows, *a priori*, that male and female are social roles that do not depend upon the obvious physiological differences between men and women? And why is it that the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

women who write such stuff always seem to look like they have just come from Little League tryouts? There must be a rule that specifies all feminist academics shall cut off their hair and wear only jeans and sweatshirts.

One big fad in feminist studies these days is "proving" that sexual differences in temperament and behavior are unrelated to hormones. Professor Ruth Bleier (photographed in sweatshirt and jeans at the University of Wisconsin) fills up a book with chemical formulae, while at the same time contriving not to mention all the mainstream research that would reduce her arguments to rubble. What she *does* spend time on is in denunciations of what she calls "heterosexism"—that pernicious idealogy that discourages little girls from growing up to prefer the company of women.

A more clever approach is offered by Anne Fausto-Sterling in *Myths of Gender*. For every piece of research suggesting a physiological basis for sex differences, she either cites an article on the other side or dismisses the research as "not currently an important view" or "disingenuous."

In fact, the new feminist sciences have no positive aim, only a desire to discredit sexist biology and psychology. While "sexist" scientists attempt to tackle the givens of experience and to find explanations for the universal patterns of sexual distinctions, feminists begin by shutting their eyes to the painful facts of life. Their hostility to nature is understandable if we consider that feminism came out of the same 19th-century reformist milieu that gave us the first natural food craze, prohibition, and the Victorian moral uplift. Like their spiritual ancestresses—the Susan B. Anthonys, Carrie Nations, and Mrs. Grundys—feminists cannot abide the old Adam. They are desperate to trade in the beer-swilling, cigar-smoking, street-brawling lout so imperfectly designed by the Creator for a new model—someone with Alan Alda's assertiveness, Tom Brokaw's brains, and David Bowie's masculinity. While their grandmothers insisted on referring to the "limbs" of a table and a chicken's "upper-joint," the modern bluenose takes refuge in "chairperson," "our father/mother," "he/she." (They all ought to learn Latin, which has no real third person pronoun. Beginning students always manage to say, *amat*: he, she, it loves, fast enough to sum up most reactions to femspeak.) Feminist writers and scholars simply translate their aversion to reality into the gibberish of academic discipline as if they were trying to confirm the old stereotypes of women—incapable, dear things, of serious thought. To update Dr. Johnson's celebrated declaration, *he/she lies, and he/she knows he/she lies.*

Whenever I read such feminist stuff, I am reminded of an acute comment thrown out by one of the contributors to a special issue of *Science* dedicated to these matters (20 March 81): Conception cannot take place unless the sexual behavior of males and females is sufficiently different. Since animal behavior is partly a function of our central nervous system, male and female brains have to be at least different enough for mating to be possible. Otherwise, women might just as well cut their hair off and wear jeans and sweatshirts. What is so intolerable about the most obvious things in the world? No one, after all, is claiming that "biology is destiny" except in the sense that it is destiny for an apple, if it is thrown up in the air, to fall to earth.

Not all feminists or "womens studies" scholars are liars or lesbians. A good many of them are making important contributions to their disciplines, precisely because they concentrate on the uniqueness of the feminine experience. A few names come immediately to mind: Alice S. Rossi for her studies of women students, Niles Newton for her exploration of the complex eroticism of the female sex, Ann Douglas for her observations on the feminization of 19th-century America, Carol Gilligan for her often dotty but sometimes sensible remarks on female ethics, Sherry Ortner for contributing the woman as nature/man as culture distinction to sociology and anthropology, and philosopher Carol McMillan, who makes her first appearance in *Chronicles* this month. What all these writers share is the realization that boys and girls are different and an awareness of the significance of those differences.

The differences show up in so many ways. Take the case of birthdays. What do most men want on their birthday? A fishing rod, a box of cigars, golf clubs, a table saw? All the things that take him out of the domestic circle and allow him to forget, if only for an hour, that he has been seduced into becoming civilized. Even books are an escape. (How many men, I wonder, read books and smoke cigars just to have an excuse to get away to their den?) But what do their wives ask for? Perfume, bath oil, flowers, a frilly nightgown. It doesn't take a dirty mind like Dr. Ruth's to know why. These preferences suggest more than the usual generalizations on hairy brutes and ethereal creatures.

Gifts are, in a way, tributes to who and what we are. An inappropriate gift (say, a pair of designer jeans) is offensive, because it tells me what you really think of me. By what they expect for presents, men affirm themselves as undomesticated individuals, while women declare in no uncertain terms that they are daughters of Eve. When a woman gives up on perfume and starts asking (honestly) for sensible things, she is not getting old: she is dying. It isn't sex so much as beauty. Even the poorest, drabbest grandmother likes to have nice things about, likes to look her best. It's not for you, poor man, so much as it is for her.

Men without women would probably be even worse than the Hittites—great empire builders with no apparent sense of beauty. Not that women necessarily create beauty. Georg Simmel was probably close to the mark when he suggested that women rarely display *original* genius in the arts (although they have made enormous contributions to lyric poetry and the novel). On the other hand, they demand beauty from us: it is one of the conditions (along with children) on which they consent to live with us. Inevitably, we suffered from delusions of grandeur: they wanted painted walls and a basket of flowers; we gave them Vermeer and Brahms.

I can only imagine what my feminist former friends and colleagues will say to all of the above. They will probably not offer an actual counterargument or genuine response of any kind. In the unlikely event of a radical feminist reading this magazine, we shall find ourselves treated to lectures on sexist insensitivity and male chauvinism. With any luck, we might hear from one of those organizations with charming acronyms like ALLECTO, B.I.T.C.H., SCUM, or NOW.

(continued on page 15)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

SEXUAL POLITICS *by George Gilder*

The 1980's witnessed one of the greatest miracles in the history of American politics and the climactic triumph of one of the most effective political leaders ever to emerge in America. That leader was a woman, and however well-known she is today, she has never achieved the honor and celebrity of her many inferiors. The national newsmagazines have never granted her a cover story or a full appreciation. The dimensions of her achievement are still not understood, even by the conservative publications that gave her their moderately enthusiastic support. The newest history texts pay heavy credit to her adversaries but scarcely acknowledge her epochal role.

Nonetheless, when serious histories of this era come to be written, Phyllis Schlafly will take her place among the tiny number of leaders who made a decisive and permanent difference. As much as Martin Luther King, Earl Warren, John Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, and Eugene McCarthy on the left and Ronald Reagan, Barry Goldwater, Robert Bartley, William Buckley, and Jack Kemp on the right, she changed the political landscape of her country. In fact, by the measure of the odds she faced and overcame, Schlafly's achievement excels all the others'.

Schlafly's 10 books suggest the scope of her activities. A *Choice Not An Echo* sold three million copies and helped spark both the Goldwater movement and the Reagan candidacy. Her works on military strategy spurred the campaign that finally triumphed in President Reagan's High Frontier defense scheme. But the centerpiece of her achievement was the victory against the Equal Rights Amendment, a mobilization against all the most fully established and prestigious forces in American life.

Opposed to her at the outset were 90 percent majorities in both houses of Congress, every live American President and President's wife, every major state governor except an ambivalent Ronald Reagan, all leading mayors, both political parties' platforms and leadership, every major newspaper, magazine, and television network, the League of Women Voters, all the old-line Protestant denominations, the National and World Councils of Churches, several leading Catholic and Jewish organizations and publications, and huge majorities of the American public as registered by all public opinion polls. The ERA forces, moreover, combined their overwhelming numbers with fanatical determination, continual use of government funds and agencies, and the same complete dominance of the media that still today keeps Mrs. Schlafly from receiving her due.

Within months, this coalition pushed the Amendment through 35 state legislatures, just three short of the necessary three-quarters. For seven years the American political establishment unleashed a relentless bombardment of the remaining legislatures. Congress appropriated $5 million for the International Women's Year, the bulk of it devoted to the ERA campaign, and gave scores of millions to other entities involved in the ratification drive. All Federal departments and agencies were ordered by the President to apply "every resource of the Federal government" to the

This essay is a chapter from Men and Marriage *(Pelican Publishing, New Orleans), a revised edition of George Gilder's* Sexual Suicide.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cause. As an Interior Department memo put it: "This is not to be considered a partisan issue," but part of an antidiscrimination effort "which Federal employers are now obliged to support." During the climactic year of 1978, President Carter himself traveled with his wife to Illinois, Schlafly's home state, in the week before the scheduled vote, to implore the state legislature to pass the Amendment. But for the 13th straight time, the legislature refused. By the official deadline for ratification in 1979, the tally revealed a net loss of one state since Schlafly's effort began to gain momentum in 1977.

But the proponents would not give up. In a blatantly illegal action, in defiance of the Constitution and the powers of the states, Congress extended the ratification period by an additional 39 months and prohibited all rescisions during that time. In November 1979, before the Congressional vote, 36 women's magazines from *Ms.* to the *Ladies Home Journal*—with a combined circulation of 60 million and varying views on almost everything—chimed in lockstep with articles for ERA. Then the Carter Administration lavished yet more money and mobilized the Federal government anew in yet another massive drive for passage. But once again the opposition held firm; by the end of the extension no further states had passed the Amendment and it was at last allowed to die.

By this time, the mood was beginning to turn. In 1980 a Republican platform, for the first time, actually came out against the Amendment, despite a frenzy of protest. The Republican candidate Ronald Reagan continued to oppose it. But Reagan was never a leader in stopping ERA. Even in radio messages criticizing the proposed law, he would spend most of his time asserting his fervent support for "equal rights." Then, amazingly, he would turn over the microphone to his daughter Maureen and give her equal time to speak in behalf of the Amendment. No national political leader had any substantial impact on the outcome.

There was only one significant leader of the anti-ERA effort, and that was enough—for it was Phyllis Schlafly. She won, in part, because she is one of the country's best speakers and debaters and its best pamphleteer since Tom Paine. She won because of her indefatigable energy and willpower, mobilizing women in state after state where the Amendment was contested. But most of all she won because she understood what was finally at stake in feminism. She was defending both the sexual and legal constitutions of the United States from their most serious attack of this century.

Essentially, the ERA would have granted to the Federal bench, long dominated below the Supreme Court level by the some 400 liberal appointees of the Carter Administration, nearly carte blanche to redefine the relations between the sexes in America. Voluminous testimony before Senator Orrin Hatch's subcommittee of the Judiciary Committee showed that, among many other significant effects, the Amendment would probably have: (1) eliminated all rights of wives and mothers to be supported by their husbands, except to the extent husbands could claim an equal right; (2) eliminated all laws in any way restricting the rights of the gay liberation movement publically to teach, proselytize, or practice their sexual ideology; (3) forced sexual integration of all schools, clubs, colleges, athletic teams, and facilities; (4) forced the drafting of women and the sexual integration of all military units; (5) threatened the tax exemption of most religious schools; and (6) compelled the use of government funds for abortions.

Even more extreme interpretations are perfectly possible in the courts. Indeed, some skeptics point out that feminists are now gaining from judges much of what they lost in the legislatures, that liberals are now attaining the ERA's goals through judicial interpretations of the 14th Amendment and through novel extensions of the Civil Rights Act. This is true to a great extent. But the ERA battle was always a struggle not only to stop a specific law, but also to halt the momentum of the sexual revolution. The battle will never be over. But Phyllis Schlafly, though still unique, no longer stands alone. Her example has created a new feminine ideal and a new constituency of the country's conservative women who know what is actually at stake in the smarmy rhetoric of feminism and should be able to repeat their victories.

The sexual revolutionaries had the support of "public opinion" as registered by the polls and of political opinion as asserted by politicians. But Schlafly tapped the support of private opinions: the real personal convictions of the men and women who voted again and again in referenda and in elections and finally even in legislatures against the sexual revolution. As repeated surveys by Stanley Rothman and S. Robert Lichter have shown, private opinion diverges widely from establishment opinion on every major sexual question, from special gay rights to adultery.

In this sense, the defeat of the ERA was merely a symbol of a larger infrastructure of opinion that upholds our family life and our democratic processes. ERA was only one of many issues on which deeply ingrained conservative views prevailed in recent years against all the fevered movements and fashions of the time.

Despite some public opinion polls and Supreme Court decisions to the contrary, voters have repeatedly rejected liberalization of abortion laws. Except in cases of rape, incest, or risk to the mother's life, substantial majorities continue to oppose abortion. Yet the feminist demand for "control over our own bodies" seems eminently justifiable to virtually every media authority. The tragic results of covert abortion mills, coat-hanger surgery, and Mexican "vacations" are well-known. Unlike most poll questions, moreover, on which most respondents know little and could care less about the topic, abortion is a matter on which significant public opinion actually exists, an issue on which people have relatively strong and considered beliefs. Since the informed elites have influence far beyond their numbers, the tenacity of public opposition suggests a resistance profound enough to demand explanation.

What is it about these so-called social issues—embracing matters as varied as gun control, abortion, and busing—that leads substantial majorities of voters to violate, and vote against, the considered views of perhaps 90 percent of the American intelligentsia. The answer is that all these issues directly impinge on that sensitive psychological terrain, involving sexuality, children, and the family, which underlies the sexual constitution of the society. Unlike many intellectuals whose lives are devoted to legal and scientific abstraction, most of the people still instinc-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tively recognize that preservation of the sexual constitution may be even more important to the social order than preservation of the legal constitution. They recognize that no laws can prevail against the dissolution of the social connections and personal motivations that sustain a civilized polity. They acknowledge, with Carl Jung, that while the society can resist epidemics of physical disease, it is defenseless against diseases of the mind. Against "psychic epidemics," our laws and medicines are virtually helpless.

The relationship of each of these issues to the sexual constitution, though perhaps not immediately clear, is psychologically profound. Guns are a good example. The United States is a nation of households, most containing a man who deeply feels his responsibility for defending his family—and who fears that his ability to do it is diminishing in modern society. The ultimate nightmare of almost every man is to witness helplessly the rape of his wife. Only somewhat less threatening to the very core of male consciousness is the possibility of the violation of his home.

The role of protector of wife and children is as old as the family nexus itself, as old and deeply ingrained as the role of provider. A move by the state finally to incapacitate the man in this responsibility—and usurp his place—undermines the validity of the family itself and the man's part in it. In this role, the gun is not a mere symbol. It *objectively* increases the man's capacity to defend his household.

In addition, a gun is an emblem of the male as hunter. This, according to many anthropologists, was the primordial role of the evolving male *Homo sapiens*. In *Men in Groups*, Lionel Tiger contends that the male propensity to work in all-male teams originated in these early expeditions.

Today, men across the land continue to hunt compulsively, despite a possibly declining need or appetite for the available game. They early give their male children guns and ceremoniously teach them the rules of their use. As anyone who has undergone this paternal instruction knows and remembers, it is a portentous event, conducted in the atmosphere of an initiation rite.

The obstinate refusal of many males to support gun control is not chiefly a product of conditioning by the weapons industry. Rather, millions of men fear gun control because they are losing life-control; they are losing the sense of a defined male identity and role in the family. They cling to these weapons and persist in their hunts as totems of masculinity, as rites and symbols of their continuing role as protector and provider in the family.

In this sense, the guns have a virtually religious import, and gun restrictions pose a serious psychological threat. Unless this erosion of the sexual constitution is recognized as a major social problem—for which realistic solutions rather than utopian incantations must be provided—gun control, however desirable, will remain politically difficult and practically unenforceable outside a police state.

The sexual dimensions of the abortion issue may be more obvious, but they are little better understood. The usual assumption is that opposition to abortion on demand stems from a puritanical aversion to premarital sex, combined with a religious superstition that feticide is murder. The real reasons, however, may be significantly different. Beyond the significance of antiabortion sentiment as a repudiation of sexual liberation in general, it may be seen as a symbol of resistance to the erosion of male sexuality.

When the women demanded "control over our own bodies," they believed they were couching the issue in the least objectionable way. But as Norman Mailer pointed out at the time, they were in fact invoking one of the most extreme claims of the movement and striking at one of the most profound male vulnerabilities. For, in fact, few males have come to psychological terms with the existing birth-control technology; few recognize the extent to which it shifts the balance of sexual power further in favor of women. A man quite simply cannot now father a baby unless his wife is fully and deliberately agreeable. There are few social or cultural pressures on her to conceive. Male procreativity is now dependent, to a degree unprecedented in history, on the active pleasure of women.

The psychological consequences of this change are greater than they might at first appear. Throughout the centuries, men could imagine their sexual organs as profoundly powerful instruments. If they engaged in a normal amount of sexual activity—"sowing their wild oats"—they could assume that they would cause a number of women to bear their children. Male potency was not simply a matter of erectile reliability; it was a fell weapon of procreation. Women viewed male potency with some awe, and males were affirmed by this response.

This masculine attribute is now almost completely lost. The male member is no longer a decisive organ in itself. Thus the feminist demand that women have control over their own bodies accentuated an unconscious recognition that males have almost completely lost control of procreative activity. Women are only marginally dependent on men—women can conceive a baby artificially or in one passing encounter. But a man cannot validate his procreative powers, his role in the chain of nature, without the active, deliberate, and now-revocable cooperation of a woman. This change in the sexual balance between men and women is still being absorbed by the society. People resist legal abortion on demand out of a sense of justifiable conservatism toward continued changes in the sexual constitution.

Busing, most sex education, and high school birth control often represent a drive by the state to take children from families and expose them to ideologies and social movements—or use them in social experiments—fervently opposed by the parents themselves. The parents' response—"not with my kid, you don't"—is a serious threat to the public schools. But the public school programs are a serious threat to the integrity and discipline of the future generations on which the nation's economy and stability depend.

The national elites remain largely incapable of offering programs of communal affirmation and male socialization that would in any way reduce crime, violence, and narcotic escapism, divorce, abandonment, and sexual disorder. So they advocate programs of adaptation—no fault divorce, sex education, free pills and condoms for teenagers, methadone clinics and outreach centers for addicts—which collectively worsen the crisis of the sexual constitution.

Neither liberals nor establishment conservatives have any real remedies. Liberals would make the problems far worse

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

by subsidizing them with expanded welfare, day-care, unisex job training, and other feminized government programs that richly earn the disdain they receive in street society. But many conservative men are little better. Lacking the guts to rebuff the upper-class feminist ladies, they go along with most of the feminist agenda, which still prevails in Washington bureaucracies under the Reagan Administration. They fail to show the resolution and decisiveness needed to develop a complex of new social policies designed to strengthen families and socialize men. Thus the problems keep getting worse, and the people, demoralized and confused, show a rising and justifiable contempt for the world of politics.

Enhancing that contempt is the effort of feminists to emasculate the political order itself. One of the most notable concerns of the moderate wing of women's liberation is equal representation in politics. In 1984, the movement induced the Democratic Party to nominate for Vice President a woman with no apparent qualifications for the office, and the Republicans to pad out their convention schedule with unqualified female speakers. Displaying indifference to American democratic principles, the movement has managed to get both political parties to accept the idea that a truly representative national convention would be half female. Although willing in practice to accept somewhat smaller proportions, both parties required every state to make a good-faith effort to achieve a delegation composed 50 percent of women.

Such disguised quotas bear the implication, radically inimical to any democratic process, that the electorate consists of separate, homogeneous, and identifiable groups, each best represented by one of its own kind. Such a conception of American voters is obviously wrong. Women vote for men most of the time; young people vote for their elders; blacks vote for whites and whites for blacks. The women's movement ranks high among the groups from whom women seem least likely to choose their representatives.

This flaw in the case for quotas emerged dramatically at the Democratic Convention of 1972 when the issue was first joined. The Democratic credentials committee found deeply suspicious the small number of women (9 percent) on Mayor Richard Daley's regular Chicago delegation. The regulars had been overwhelmingly elected in the primaries, but the democratic test of election was of little avail against the evidentiary test of quotas. After citing some trivial infractions of the rules, which could have had no effect on the result (no one denied that Mayor Daley was the choice of the people), the Democratic Convention seated an alternate Chicago group. Consisting of men and women defeated by the regulars or unwilling to challenge them at the polls, it was an impressive reform assemblage of variegated sex and color. Its failure to include significant representation from the blue-collar ethnic groups that dominate the white neighborhoods of Chicago was compensated by a high sense of moral and financial worth. In future conventions, this unrepresentative result became a matter of course.

This is a familiar story, but a key facet of it was little remarked. The women chosen were almost totally unrepresentative of the city's females. Helen Lopata in her book *Occupation Housewife* summarizes her in-depth interviews with a demographic sampling of some 600 Chicago women. She found that they overwhelmingly left politics to their men. In a city where many men do work of uncommon drudgery, this system may have been a significant part of the sexual constitution. What the movement demanded was not representation of Chicago women but a cultural revolution in the city. Whatever one thinks of this goal, it has nothing to do with democratic processes.

Indeed, the demands themselves symbolize feminists' failure to comprehend either democracy or the fundamental relations between men and women in every society. Again and again—on ERA, abortion, employment quotas, and all-male clubs and associations, from the military to the Little League—the feminists turn to the courts for coercive solutions when voters refuse to give them what they want. But coercive solutions are necessarily enforced by male power and ultimately hostile to women's interests in politics. A social system based on physical force, even if disguised by court orders, will eventually become a patriarchy far more oppressive than any democracy dominated by men. It is only a democracy, spontaneously devoted to the rule of law and the restraint of male force, that can easily accommodate a feminist movement or ensure female suffrage.

The "moderate" demand for quotas in politics undermines these democratic protections. Politics has been chiefly a male domain in all societies ever studied by anthropologists and historians. Women everywhere, unless hectored by feminists, tend to turn to men for leadership on general political issues. Male dominance in politics is part of the sexual constitution of all civilized societies. This does not mean imposition of limits on the extraordinary women who often rise to key positions by their own efforts and on their own merits. But the effort forcibly to feminize our affairs by quotas violates profound human propensities. By preventing governance from conforming to human nature, sexual liberalism provides a perfect opening for the familiar excesses of abstract ideology and totalitarianism.

Politics is ultimately based on force, and the most effective wielders of force are groups of men. If young men are estranged from the leadership of the society, the social order is threatened by its young men. In contemporary America the effects of this destabilization may be seen most clearly in the ghetto, where youths express far more respect for the Mafia than for any American public institution and where the women and elderly all too often cower in their apartments for fear of the hoodlums who rule the streets. But throughout history, alliances between military officers and male groups of mesomorphic thugs have always emerged when the established leadership has lost its hold on the public.

To replace the legitimacy of the vote with the legitimacy of the warrior group has always been an essential revolutionary idea. The Nietzchean exaltation of tribal values against the effeminacy of democratic ideals, the celebration of the hunter against the domesticated man of the city and farm, the legendary rule of a male bond of blood in tribal Germany, the mystical worship of war and the warrior brotherhood, all served the Nazi stormtroopers as legitimizing myths. Similar ideas have informed all the most

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

destructive regimes in history, from Mussolini to Mao, from the Japanese warlords to communist cadres.

In any primitive tribe, rule by male fighters is the most natural form of government. Not only do they command force, but they also exert a moral appeal. The idea that men who risk their lives to preserve and protect the state earn the right to rule offers a seductive alternative to the sovereignty of passing majorities of voters. When this idea prevails among large numbers of young men, democratic constraints are helpless against it.

The history of the 20th century confirms the continuing potency of the warrior dream against all the codes and sanctions of democracy. Dictators and demagogues, juntas and caudillos, tyrants and revolutionaries, all supported by young men in military or paramilitary groups, always pose the greatest threat to civilization and peace.

Military despotism is the political counterpart of the social breakdown of monogamy into the disorders of polygyny, homosexuality, and female-headed families. The release of large numbers of young men from the bonds and disciplines of marriage and family always leads to social disruptions. The punk rockers and soccer rioters of mid-80's Britain reflect the loss of male roles through high tax rates and resulting levels of joblessness. The breakdown of law and order and the demoralization of the courts and police in U.S. cities suggests the utter impotence of the superstructures of government when the infrastructures of sexual discipline collapses.

Without a stable family order, in which adult men civilize the young men, terror rules. No array of day-care centers, police powers, social welfare agencies, psychiatric or drug clinics, special schools, and prisons can have any significant effect. William Tucker's recent book, *Vigilante*, vividly shows the imbecile bathos into which our legal system has already fallen as a result of the decline of the stark mandate of justice into the weasels and waffles of social liberalism.

At a time when millions of young men are slipping beyond the reach of democratic institutions—indeed, outside the social order itself—the drive to emasculate our politics threatens the foundations of democracy itself. Democracy is not so secure a system that in a serious crisis it can easily survive the loss of the instinctual appeal of male leadership. A state in which the police and other governmental authorities are heavily in female hands would not last a week. The very emergence of such a state would itself signify either the massive estrangement of men from politics or the degeneration of democracy into some court-ruled system of quotas.

It is part of Phyllis Schlafly's genius to have persistently linked the concerns of family with the reform of education, the conservative revival of our politics, and the rehabilitation of our military. From her concern with the national defense to her defense of the nation's families, she espouses a fully coherent vision of the American predicament. A society of families both constrains male aggressions and channels them toward the protection and support of family and society.

Sexual liberation chiefly liberates powerful men to leave their aging wives and marry young women. With many men taking the fertile years of more than one woman, large numbers of single men are deprived of the possibility of family life, and large numbers of divorced women grow old alone. Released from the consolations and constraints of family, single men tend to afflict and demoralize the society.

Every society is continually invaded by barbarians: the new generations of young males. Unless they are tamed by women and families and disciplined by adult male leaders, the barbarians will dominate the society. As in the ghetto, the defection of the men from family responsibilities leaves the women helpless to handle their teenage boys and the police impotent to control them. The youth then bully and terrorize the women and the weak.

The economy also declines as the long-term efforts of male providers give way to short-term and predatory economic behavior. An emasculated politics cannot defend itself against male outlaws and exploiters, muggers and terrorists, hijackers and assassins, nor can it provide for the economic growth to finance itself and the growing needs of a welfare state in a time of chaos.

Similarly in the international arena, an emasculated politics is incapable of sustaining an effective national defense. Rather than defend society, the young men attack it and exalt macho foreign potentates and desperadoes. Again the captivation of ghetto and other youth by Third World thugs and enemies of America illustrates the contempt that an emasculated politics and economics earns from its young men—and young women as well.

With West Point and Annapolis forgoing the appeal and power of the masculine principle, the military ideal is dissolving into unisex mush. The Pentagon has swollen into a gigantic bureaucracy—honeycombed with equal opportunity goo, sensitivity pap, and consciousness uplift prattle—that summons a martial spirit hardly more lively than the Department of Health and Human Services.

By joining the two issues of national defense and family defense, Phyllis Schlafly has tapped the energies that spring from the eloquent assertion of any long suppressed, evaded, and fragmented set of primal truths. All politics is, on one level, sexual politics. Defending the sexual constitution, Schlafly is clearly America's leading exponent and protector of democracy and capitalism.

The best sign of the continuing health of American society is the regular emergence of political leaders in unexpected places who are willing to commit themselves to a new defense of the values of civilization. Under perpetual assault from the forces of decadence and decline, protectionism and sloth, the American system still summons vibrant new tides of resistance and revitalization.

Our businesses and technologies are renewed by immigrants from around the world and by American entrepreneurs from rural and religious backgrounds. Our families are restored by forces of regeneration from both fundamentalist Protestant and traditionalist Catholic churches. Our politics find new resources of American redemption in the rise of moral majorities, immigrant patriots, tax rebels, conservative educational entrepreneurs, and pro-family campaigners.

Even to conservative intellectuals, some of these forces seem crude: too passionate, too fundamental, too foreign, too cultic, too populist, too unsophisticated, too lower-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

middle-class, altogether alien to the established schools and churches that for decades have purported to uphold tradition while in fact selling out and flaking out before every new fashion of decadence and socialism. The idea that America might find renewal from a mélange of movements of evangelical women, wetbacks, *Dartmouth Review* militants, South Asian engineers, Bible thumpers, boat people, Moonies, Mormons, Cuban refugees, fundamentalist college deans, Amway soap pushers, science wonks, creationists, Korean fruit peddlers, acned computer freaks, and other unstylish folk seems incomprehensible to many observers who do not understand that an open capitalist society always finds its salvation from the last perpetually becoming first.

In America, no one is required to go to the Liberty Baptist Church or watch *The 700 Club*. But the movements that these institutions represent and promote provide the best hope for American democracy and peace, capitalist prosperity and progress. Ironically enough, it is the so-called reactionaries who offer the best prospects for continued American leadership in the world economy in the new era of accelerating technological change. Just as the nuclear families of Western Europe unleashed the energies of the industrial revolution, so the new miracles of modern technology are created and sustained by the moral discipline and spiritual incandescence of a culture of churches and families. In families, men and women routinely make long-term commitments and sacrifices that are inexplicable and indefensible within the compass of secular hedonist values. Modern society, no less than any previous civilization, rests on the accumulated moral and spiritual capital embodied in the rock of ages.

Old Adam, New Eve

(continued from page 9)

What answer can we make to those who will neither discuss nor debate their plans to drag an entire society against the grain of human nature? Early in this century, Ortega had another set of intellectual totalitarians in mind when he declared: "If anyone in a discussion with us is not concerned with adjusting himself to truth, if he has no wish to find the truth, he is intellectually a barbarian."

Barbarians, as C.P. Cavafy pointed out, have their uses. They are a constant reminder of how much a civilization stands to lose. Fifth-century Athens was full of depictions of their hero Theseus' struggle against the Amazons. The Theseum, the Stoa Poikile, and the Parthenon all portrayed the struggle of Greek civilization against the upside-down world of Amazons. It was even chiseled into the shield of Pheidias' monumental statue of Athena.

The Amazons played an important part in the Athenian national myth. The Athenians, grateful for their deliverance from the Persians, expressed their struggle for civilization in a series of powerful metaphors: gods against giants, lapiths against centaurs, Athenians against Amazons. Our own Amazons have set themselves even more defiantly against everything vital in our civilization—our religion, the remnants of a chivalrous code of honor, our literature (thoroughly sexist), even our language. But while Theseus and his comrades were probably real men and the Amazons fictional beasts, our own Amazons are all too real. It is the men who have become fictional.

If feminists in their rage against the truth were only *intellectual* barbarians, all might turn out well in the end. Our civilization will be one with Nineveh and Tyre, but empires have folded up before now. When the Roman Empire collapsed in the West, it was only a matter of 1,500 years or so before Europeans rediscovered amenities like indoor plumbing, regular baths, and an effective postal system.

But the feminists have a grander program. Vandalizing a civilization is not enough. The very idea of sexual equality (man-woman) strikes deep at the roots of human nature itself. The age of chivalry was gone long before Burke pronounced his famous eulogy, but the age of husbands and wives, mothers and children—what name do we have for it except the age of man, the human age?

All this twaddle about sensitivity and equal rights, what does it come down to? A rebellion against what we are, whether you believe that "what" was declared by God or is the accumulated product of millions of years of evolution. And what is the male response to the lesbians and playgirls who wish to elevate the consciousness of their wives and daughters? It is somewhere between enthusiastic assent—"take her, she's yours"—or polite "I beg to differ." Most decent men are simply not prepared to give feminists the treatment they deserve. They could be our sisters, daughters, or—God help us—our wives, gone off the deep end for a season. They'll be back.

Many of them will be. Giving birth has an odd way of turning brats into women. But what will they be coming back to—the new sensitive male? I sometimes wonder why they should bother. The problem with women does not lie with women but with men; with men who were so afraid of women that they wouldn't consent to educate their daughters properly until education meant job-training, with businessmen who think it's good business to have an economy based on two-income families, with the all-American boys who refuse to grow up and accept full responsibility for a wife and children, and with the new sensitive males that once upon a time we would have called sissies.

In the old days, when the ladies withdrew from the table and men knew the comfort of old port and strong tobacco, one of the first toasts offered was inevitably: "Gentlemen, I give you the ladies." In that same spirit, I dedicate this issue to the patient women of America, and this essay, written on the day after her birthday, to my wife and the mother of my four children.

—Thomas Fleming

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Shotgun Marriage *by Carol McMillan*

"The Shadowy Female absorbing
The enormous Sciences . . . "

—William Blake

Reflections on Gender and Science by Evelyn Fox Keller, New York: Yale University Press.

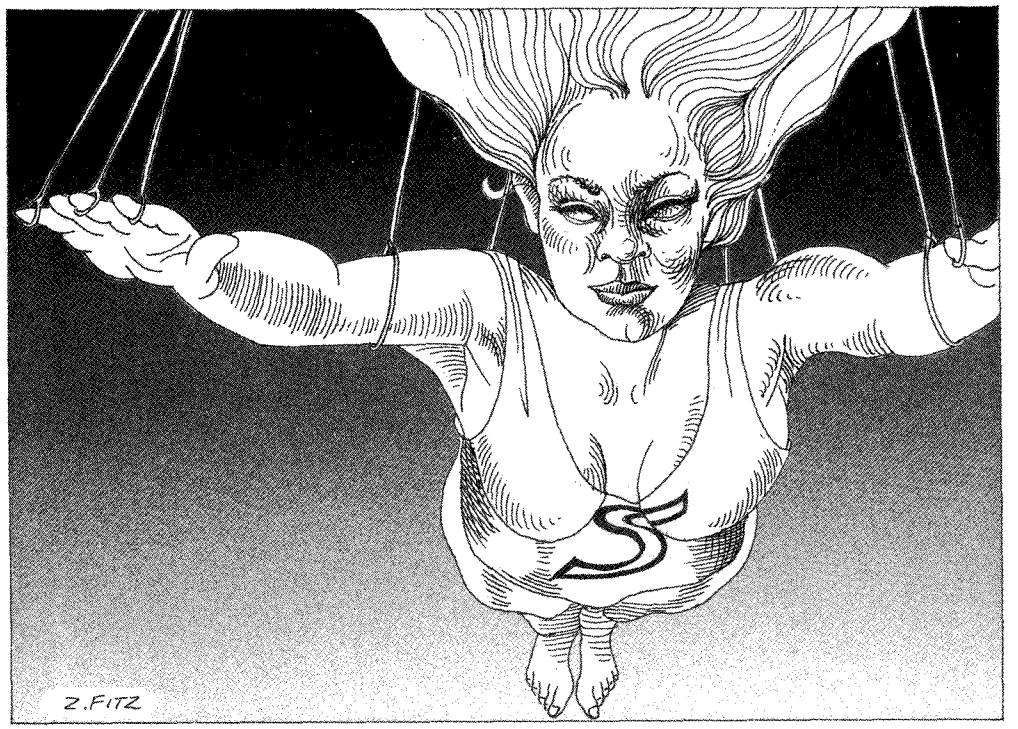
Mothers and Such: Views of American Women and Why They Changed by Maxine L. Margolis, Berkeley: University of California Press.

Mother Care/Other Care by Sandra Scarr, New York: Basic Books.

Reproductive control and genetic manipulation have been making the headlines for years. One day new developments in birth control herald a freer, happier world for women. The next day, knowledge also gained from those very same developments foretell a future of horror in which babies will be reared in "test tubes" and wombs put out for renting. An apt picture indeed for science in the modern world, since it has been obvious for long enough that we cannot have our cake and eat it, too. Well, obvious perhaps only to those who are willing to concede that the view of science as an autonomous and progressive body of knowledge providing an ever fuller description of reality "as it is" needs to be debunked in order to show that the claims made for science are an expression of the concerns and interests of the scientific community, shaped as they are by political and economic factors.

Evelyn Fox Keller's *Reflections on Gender and Science* develops such a view to show how the ideology of the scientific mode is wedded to certain conceptions of masculinity and femininity. The assumption on which the birth of modern science rested, namely that nature was something to be dominated, had as its counterpart a particular relationship between the sexes. Already in Plato there is a fear and distrust of all that is associated with the feminine, and this culminates in Baconian science, in which the use of sexual metaphors served to demonstrate that the success of science depended, as in the conventional relationships of men and women, on an aggressive attitude of subordination and domination towards nature. While science was masculine, nature was typically regarded as being female. The possibility that male and female, objectivity and subjectivity, reason and emotion were all integral parts of the same reality was lost in the triumph of science over alchemy and in the crucial role science played in the establishment of industrial capitalism: an assertive aggressiveness which supported those kinds of knowledge that would lead to the mastery, control, and domination of nature.

Of course, science did not have to develop in such a way, and it is certainly one of Keller's contentions that not only could science have been predicated on a different set of precepts, but success in science has actually been achieved because such rhetoric is frequently ignored. A careful and thoughtful analysis, drawing upon philosophy, the history of science, and psychology, serves to persuade the reader that science needs to and does tolerate "a form of knowledge that grants to the world around us its independent integrity but does so in a way that remains cognizant of, indeed relies on, our connectivity with that



Carol McMillan is author of Women, Reason, and Nature *(Princeton University Press).*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

world and affirms our connection to it."

What is the relevance of gender for science? Keller claims that greater recruitment of women into the scientific community would play a crucial role in transforming the prevailing ideology of science, since women have no emotional investment in images of domination and manipulation. The ensuing transformation of science would satisfy feminist demands that all aggressive, male ideologies need to be destroyed but still retain "the emancipatory force of modern science." Keller urges feminists not to throw the baby out with the bathwater.

Keller's comments on gender and science are genuinely revealing, but she completely ignores the fact that the cultural force science exerts upon the modern consciousness is inextricably bound up with the technological goods and power it makes possible. A science that stood in respectful awe of the order and grandeur of nature would command about as much interest as a St. Francis of Assisi. Humility is not a virtue in the modern world, and Keller seems unable to acknowledge that "the emancipatory force of modern science" to which she refers is part of that very ideology she claims to be rejecting. In any case, it is simply false to assert that women have no interest in a science predicated on manipulation and control, given the feminist insistence that the control of women over their reproductive functions, the control of women over *their* nature, is to be total and unlicensed. The dominant ideology of science actually suits feminism—and the rest of society—very well, because the real relinquishment of such an ideology would make nonsense of humanism and its embodiment in liberal values.

That the marriage between science and feminism is for life is made evident in Maxine L. Margolis' *Mothers and Such*. Arguing from a cultural materialist position, Margolis maintains that changes in the role of women occurred not so much as a result of feminist ideas but as a response to the shift of production from the home to the factory. Household production, as a way of providing for the needs of a family, gave the housewife a genuine role to play in society and, with the sale of surplus goods, guaranteed her a measure of financial independence. With industrialization, however, the role of the home as a center of social and economic life shrank considerably, leaving women unoccupied and economically dependent on their husbands. The eventual exodus of women from the home was not so much a revolt against domesticity as a necessary step towards gaining reemployment. The antifeminist ideology of a woman as a housewife and homemaker was a systematic attempt to satisfy the myth that the home needed a housewife, even though nearly everything needed by the household was bought from outside instead of being made.

Margolis offers a rich and detailed documentation of these changes, which strongly challenges the feminist view that women have been no more than denizens in the home. However, she is much too complacent in maintaining that "changes in a society's material base will lead to functionally compatible changes in its social and political structure along with changes in its secular and religious ideology, *changes that enhance the continuity and stability of the system*" (my emphasis). To be sure, industrialization did destroy the home-based economy and with that, it ought to be added, destroyed a culture and set of traditions which punctuated a form of life that revolved around the cycle of the natural world (agriculture) and the rhythms of the human condition.

Notoriously, in tearing apart communities and in reducing the home to a sort of stable suitable only for factory fodder, industrialization deprived people of the very conditions in which stability and continuity in their lives could be safeguarded. It made of the home a prison in which all those not fit enough to compete in the rat race—children, women, the disabled, the elderly—felt abandoned, and robbed women of much that gave purpose and dignity to a life tied to things of the private sphere. It is little wonder that there are a lot of angry women about.

Yet Margolis, in sympathy with feminism, ultimately regards industrialization as having "liberated" women from the domestic sphere, giving them an opportunity to pursue a career. All this would be fine, were it not for the fact that this ancient Greek prejudice in favor of the intellect and the *polis* leaves the dirty work of life to a luckless mass of exploited men *and* women. Under modern conditions, it means, too, that those features of human life which need a private sphere if they are to have any dignity—birth, sex, death—will probably suffer ever greater degradation. Feminists encourage the destruction of the private sphere at our peril.

All this is bound to sound a bit jaundiced to feminist ears, particularly in the light of Sandra Scarr's delightful discussion of the needs of children versus the demands upon working mothers in *Mother Care/Other Care*. Children are flexible, creative creatures, and working mothers, armed with intelligence and insight, should be able to make arrangements for their children that will not harm them. But, against Scarr, the fact that people are capable of bending over backwards whenever they need to does not mean that the best social arrangements are those that depend on such a posture.

There is a world of difference between those situations in which children decide for themselves to leave mother's apron strings and those in which mother's absence is forced upon them. Certainly, young children in the latter instance may bat their eyelids only once or twice, but for the mother it can be hell. The young infant may not notice who feeds and cares for it, but it is false to suggest, as Scarr does, that the infant's *mother* (suffering engorged breasts) experiences a similar indifference and that any pain she experiences in separation is just a guilt complex induced in her by an antifeminist society.

Mothers need not be under any illusion in thinking that no one can love their children in quite the way they do, particularly since—where infants and toddlers (to a lesser extent) are concerned—the provision of physical care is *the* way in which mothers relate to their young and show their love. Bathing a young baby isn't simply a matter of cleaning it up, just as dining with friends isn't simply a matter of filling the belly. And if some women wish to deny themselves such experiences, there is no reason why the rest of us should be accomplices.

On the other hand, I agree that just as a life consisting of one continual

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

round of dinner parties would leave one with a bad taste in one's mouth, so too women need other interests. But are day-care centers really the answer? Or might it not be better if the home could once again become a dynamic center in the community, obviating the need for women to seek a way of escaping the horrors of boredom and isolation? And if Margolis' no-nonsense realism means that the economic realities of life make such an option an impossibility, then it is high time feminism was seen as a desperate attempt to come to terms with a hopeless situation. For feminism, the ideology of privileged, professional women, offers no panacea to the many women not so situated, especially when one realizes that the marriage between feminism and science is for keeps.

Out On a Limb *by Thomas P. McDonnell*

"Such was that happy garden-state,
While man there walked without a mate. . . .
—Andrew Marvell

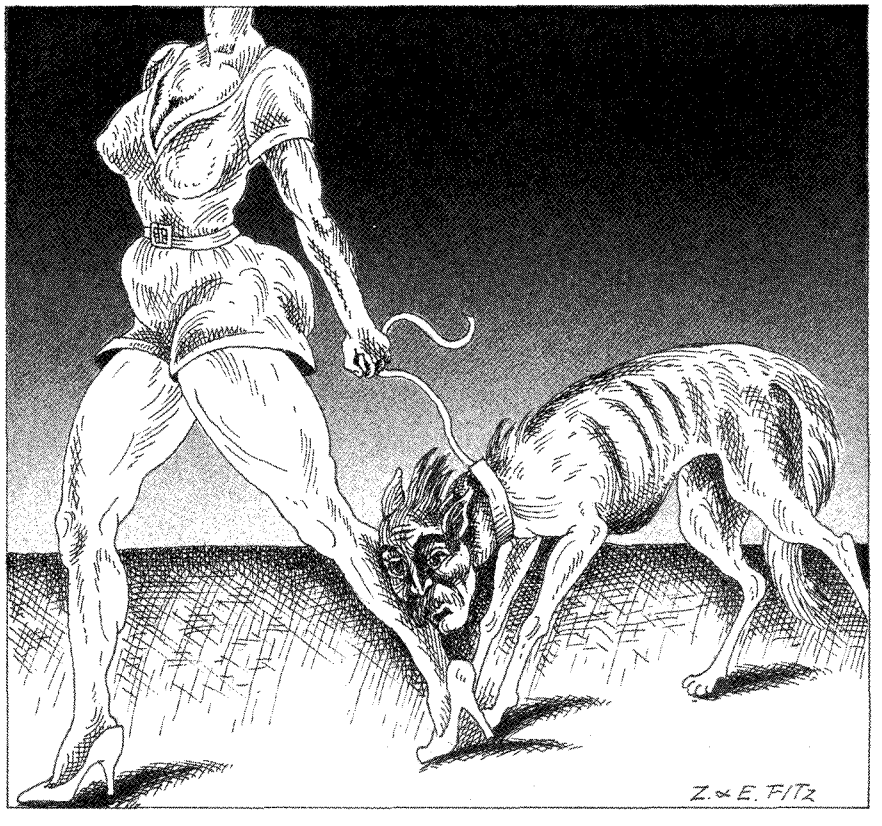
Stanley and the Women **by Kingsley Amis, New York: Summit Books.**

Kingsley Amis has been practicing the writer's trade long enough to have produced a full shelf of books. Last year's *Stanley and the Women* was not only his 17th novel but a signal that three decades have suddenly elapsed since the publication in 1954 of *Lucky Jim*. And yet it was a minor publishing scandal of the late 1985 season that there was some kind of attempt to prevent the publication of *Stanley and the Women* in this country —even after, that is, its successful appearance in Great Britain. It turns out that the attempt to "discourage" a U.S. publication of *Stanley and the Women* was the work of a handful of feminist editors in at least three of our most esteemed publishing houses, supported by their uxorious overlords.

When *Stanley and the Women* was published in England in the spring of 1984, the received word spread rapidly to both sides of the Atlantic that Amis had been simply beastly to the female of the species and was therefore not to be tolerated anywhere. But of course the attempt to delay, if not to prevent, the book's appearance in this country was bound to fail. What still seems incredible is that any such censorial effort should have been attempted at all. This remains a shocking fact, moreover, which has clearly escaped the notice of those custodians of the perishing Republic who guard with their very lives the sacred rights of their own free expression—and rightly so. Unfortunately, it is a latitude which does not extend in equal justice to those who do not fit into the approved social and political patterns of the day.

The narrator of the offensive novel is one Stanley Duke, the 45-year-old advertising manager for a London daily newspaper, whose chief concession to hedonism is that he drives an Apfelsine FK3. By the end of the novel, he will have become the automotive writer—or car critic—for the same paper. The ways and means of how Stanley earns his living, however, have little enough to do with the story. He has had thrust upon him a rather untoward avocation which has mainly to do with women, wives past and present (one in each category), plus a severe family crisis involving the onset of madness in his only son, Steve. Susan is Stanley's present wife, an assistant editor of a London literary weekly, who also reviews books. Literally emerging out of the darkness, Steve suddenly returns home one evening with no explanation as to why he was not in Spain. Steve's morose behavior manifests itself almost at once in his having ripped asunder Susan's review copy of Saul Bellow's *Herzog*, a novel she had judged good enough to keep and thus not to sell, with the accumulating review copies of other books, to the secondhand dealer.

So much, then, for Steve's estima-



Thomas P. McDonnell is a free-lance writer living near Boston.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tion of his father's present spouse. He rather prefers his biological mummsy, the ineffable Nowell, and visits her next day at her second husband's apartment. While there, he becomes violently aroused again and throws an ashtray into the telly. Nowell in turn goes into hysterics and calls Stanley to get *his* son the hell out of her apartment. Steve ends up in the still-crazier care of a female psychiatrist. Before this happens, however, Stanley had consulted another psychiatrist about Steve's condition. As a doctor and friend, he left Stanley with one of those statements of hard-learned wisdom we seldom recognize when casually uttered in more or less normal circumstances. "The rewards for being sane," he said, "may not be very many but knowing what's funny is one of them." With shuddering clarity one realizes at once that so few, if any, of the feminist reviews of *Stanley and the Women* had, for a moment, thought the book particularly funny.

As an imaginative tract against feminism, so-called, there isn't much in Amis' latest novel to get excited about. Stanley seems basically a decent sort of chap. He would never presume to play Professor Higgins to any pub's Pickering, for example, and thus demand the impossible: "Why can't a woman be more like a man?" The whole novel comes down to the rather more shocking question which is asked of Stanley by his friend the psychiatrist: "Would you say, would you assent to the proposition that all women are mad?" Stanley waffles, understandably, on that one: "Yes. No, not at all," he says, "there are exceptions, naturally."

So the best that the beleaguered Stanley can bring to the charge of madness in women, generally speaking, is that there may be exceptions. It turns out, in fact, that Susan has feigned a stabbing in the arm and accuses Steve of the assault. A medical report on the nature of the wound undermines the already fast-fading credibility of her story. The denouement to this almost pathetic aspect of the tale is that both principals, Stanley and Susan, clearly know the truth but pretend they do not. It is also clear that Susan's bizarre behavior itself is sufficient matter, surely, for further psychiatric inquiry. Each prefers, however, to settle for the accommodation of a prolonged and tolerable state of mutual delusion.

But the more a new sense of awareness beckons Stanley on, the more uncomfortable he becomes with the controlled anguish of having to live—or indeed of having already lived—a life of deviously shared illusions with most of the women he has known. He now recalls the prevailing psychic pattern of his former wife, Nowell: "She makes the past up as she goes along. You know, like communists." This may at first sound only mildly amusing, but when such a pattern itself daily informs the domestic reality of a home, then the result may be nothing less than harrowing—and that is precisely what it had become for Stanley.

The harrowing of Stanley Duke is further aggravated by the encounter with his son's female psychiatrist, one Dr. Trish Collins, who, in the most literal sense possible, has driven Steve up a very real tree on the grounds of the institution where he is incarcerated. Nowell, the biological mummsy, is called upon literally to sweet-talk poor Steve down from the tree of his dilemma. There's something madly Edenic about the scene, but any suggestion to that effect probably oughtn't to go much further than simply to say so.

It is only in the last dozen or so pages of *Stanley and the Women* that its provocative aspect comes fully into view. Stanley's psychiatrist friend refers to what he takes to be the compulsive capacity of women to—if you'll pardon the demotic—screw up a man completely:

> You can't be new to feeling the edge of the most powerful weapon in their armory. You must have suffered before from the effect of their having noticed, at least the brighter ones among them have noticed, that men are different, men quite often wonder whether they're doing the right thing and worry about it, men have been known to blame themselves for behaving badly, men not only feel they've made mistakes but on occasion will actually admit having done so, and say they're sorry, and ask to be forgiven, and promise not to do it again, and mean it. Think of that! Mean it. All beyond female comprehension. Which incidentally is why they're not novelists and must never be priests.

It is slightly odd that Kingsley Amis should allow one of his characters to contend that women as writers do not make proper novelists. This is obviously not the case, though the same overwrought character goes on to observe that though women are competing on equal terms with men in so many places, "they still finish behind men" and can't even produce "a few decent (bleeping) jugglers." He might just as well have cited, for that matter, master chess players, assorted engineers, and musical composers of great and original genius.

In any event, one has to tread carefully in this kind of territory. Men are no doubt as mad in the throes of their male aggressiveness as women are said to be in the circumlocutions of their peculiar logic. What one can fairly say about women, in comparison with men, is that the former have never initiated anything in the arts—and little enough in the sciences—that has had any significant or truly original value. Women in the arts tend to copy—or, more accurately, to feminize—what men have already done and which the latter, in most cases, have done infinitely better. It is only recently that the intuitive gifts of women have begun to produce works of some originality and freshness of view. It will probably remain true, however, that Shakespeare knew infinitely more about women than any Woman as Author has ever known about men.

And yet it was only a matter of time—as well as the steady erosion of male sensitivity brought on by the excesses of the women's movement in its more paranoid aspects—that some men would start writing novels which attempt to disclose the inner workings of the female psyche itself, which, incidentally, is the worst and cruelest way of stripping anyone naked. So it may be something other than a literary coincidence that in the same year, 1984, Kingsley Amis had published *Stanley and the Women* in Great Britain and that his opposite number in

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

this country, John Updike, both of them over 50, had published *The Witches of Eastwick* here. Meanwhile, too, Henri de Montherlant's devastating novel *The Girls* (1937) has just been reissued in this country. For what men have kept more or less to themselves, and this notably in the writing of fiction as well, until recently, is this: over 50, the average male is a hopeless dunce if he has not by then commenced to see through the various female manipulations which have kept him in thrall to women for want of their sexual favors. Anthropologists have observed that in some primitive societies the old men tend to get merry, as time goes on, while the old women become morose and withdrawn among themselves.

With the publication of these two current novels and the new edition of de Montherlant's, something may be afoot. It is from such generally unrecognized disproportions that the law of compensation may now reassert itself in the particular matter of feminist excess today. Do we see in the making, indeed, a new literary genre that will become the subject matter of future criticism: the male animal no longer perceived as hero, or even as antihero, but as victim? Only then, perhaps, will true equality have been achieved between the sexes.

REVISIONS

Holely Matrimony

There was a time when guests at a wedding did not take bets on how long *this* one would last. Husbands and wives did not always resemble star baseball players trying to jump contract and get into this year's free-agent draft. Not too many decades ago, marriage was still regarded as something more than a contractual partnership. It was an indissoluble union that transformed two separate individuals into a single being, "of one flesh."

But something happened on our way to the current 50 percent (projected) divorce rate. Firm religious doctrines in the 1950's melted away into a treacle of good feelings, and as the churches waffled on the divorce question, it was too much to expect that the state would hold firm. Soon high-minded reformers were agitating for "no-fault divorce," arguing that divorce laws kept many people trapped in "unfulfilling" marriages and forced those who did get out to submit to the indignity and hypocrisy of a divorce trial. In *The Divorce Revolution: The Unexpected Social and Economic Consequences for Women and Children in America* (New York: Free Press; $19.95), Lenore J. Weitzman reveals that the effects of no-fault divorce have not been exactly what the reformers promised. Weitzman has studied divorce statistics in California since 1970, only to find—to her utter surprise—that "on the average, divorced women and the minor children in their households experience a 73 percent decline in their standard of living in the first year after divorce." She also discovered that "gender-neutral rules . . . designed to treat men and women 'equally' have in practice served to deprive divorced women . . . of the legal and financial protections that the old law provided."

This shift to "gender neutrality" in divorce proceedings has not yet much affected the 20th-century custom of awarding child custody to mothers, but the new rules have made it more likely that a father who is willing to fight for custody will win. Phyllis Chesler discusses this new legal climate in *Mothers On Trial: The Battle for Children and Custody* (New York: McGraw-Hill; $22.95). Though the book is abominably written—a mere hodgepodge of interview quotes, fevered polemic, free verse, and fractured sociology—the patient reader can glimpse the outlines of a whole new kind of courtroom combat in which children are the usual casualties. Distressed that "40,000 fathers have won judicial custody *each year* since 1977," Chesler seeks a way out of the problem without returning to traditional sex roles. The solution, she argues, is a new custody presumption in favor of the "primary caretaker" of the child, i.e., whichever parent who has changed most of the diapers, done the shopping, feeding, and cleaning, provided the toilet training, helped with homework, and otherwise done the work of child-rearing. It is easy to sympathize with devoted mothers who have provided such care only to lose their children to a calculating husband and a sharp lawyer. Much harder to accept are Chesler's arguments on the custody rights of mothers who are adulteresses, criminals, and lesbians. Divorce traumatizes children enough without forcing them to grow up with a mother whose hobby is robbing banks or who prefers conception via turkey basters to the more traditional method.

It would be unkind to say "I told you so" to these writers, but it is the only possible response. What sensible person didn't know the havoc which relaxed divorce laws would wreak? The sad part is that neither of the ladies is willing to concede the whole thing was a mistake. Chesler has gone so far off the deep end that she finds it "enraging and terrifying" that marriage once meant that a wife could not jump into bed with anyone—male or female—whenever she chose. Less hysterical, Weitzman at least acknowledges that "the current no-fault system of divorce is inflicting a high economic toll upon women and children" and that traditional understandings of marriage afforded greater security, and yet she refuses to repudiate the disastrous "no fault" legislation. Because these reforms aimed at "fairness, justice, and economically based equality," they must be recognized as a "major step forward," even if some "correction and refinement" is needed. A few more steps in this direction, and we can start taking our divorce law from our swinging cousins, the chimpanzees.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

DISPENSATIONS

THE FUTURE OF SOUTH AFRICA AS SOUTH AFRICANS SEE IT

RICHARD JOHN NEUHAUS

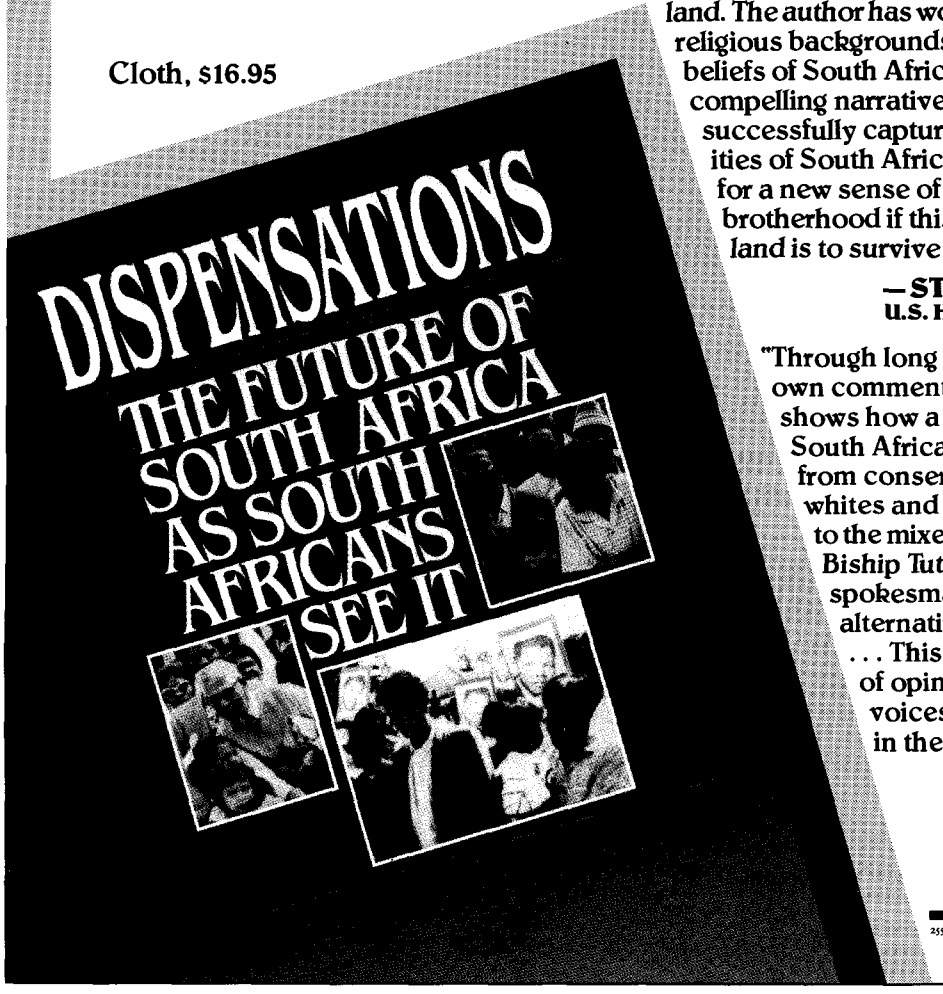
"South Africa has needed explication by an observer who is at once a rigorous Christian idealist, and a shrewd and practical observer. To have this, in addition to the elegant journalistic skills of Richard John Neuhaus is, well, providential."

—WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY, JR.

"No matter what your political perspective is on South Africa, Pastor Neuhaus's book is compelling reading. This book provides a close-up view of the men and women who will play a prominent role in deciding the destiny of this troubled land. The author has woven the history, religious backgrounds, and political beliefs of South Africans into a compelling narrative. He has successfully captured the complexities of South Africa and the need for a new sense of nationhood and brotherhood if this rich and varied land is to survive and prosper."

—STEPHEN J. SOLARZ
U.S. House of Representatives

Cloth, $16.95



"Through long interviews and his own commentary, Neuhaus shows how a wide spectrum of South Africans see the future: from conservative and reformist whites and Zulu chief Buthelezi to the mixed-race radical Boesak, Bishop Tutu, and the ANC spokesman who sees no alternative to armed struggle. . . . This presents a wide range of opinions, including many voices not generally heard in the U.S."

—BOOKLIST

631C

At your bookstore, or write:
WM. B. EERDMANS PUBLISHING CO.
255 JEFFERSON AVE. S.E. / GRAND RAPIDS, MICH. 49503

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Love and Death in the American West *by Odie B. Faulk*

"Let sixteen cowboys come sing me a song. . . .
For I'm a young cowboy and I know I've done wrong."
—Anonymous, "The Cowboy's Lament"

The Real American Cowboy **by Jack Weston, New York: Shocken Books; $19.95.**

Daughters of Joy, Sisters of Misery: Prostitutes in the American West, 1865-90 **by Anne M. Butler, Urbana: University of Illinois Press; $19.95.**

The American West has become a place of simultaneous myth and reality. There is a West where zesty young men mounted on noble steeds occasionally rounded up some cattle to be driven to market, but for the most part these cowboys never seemed to work. Instead, they sat in saloons with women of easy virtue but hearts of gold. These Westerners did little except drink, gamble, and act as witness-es to the violence which was "as American as apple pie." The towns of this American West featured shoot-outs at high noon between good guys wearing white hats and riding white horses and evil men wearing black hats and riding black horses.

There also is a West where entrepreneurs in cattle risked their investment dollars to build ranching empires that provided beef for a hungry nation. Simultaneously they gave employment to thousands of young cowboys who came to the occupation filled with romantic delusions that they were going to sleep under azure skies and beside limpid streams, sing songs to lowing cattle, and ride horses that would reciprocate their riders' love and understanding. Newly minted cowboys quickly learned that horses could be mean, shifty-eyed little brutes whose major goal in life was to kill or maim their riders, that cattle were stupid to the point of self-destruction, and that the life of the cowboy was short, hard, and dangerous.

These cowboys and cattlemen of the real West were genuine pioneers who fought loneliness and isolation, the searing heat of summer, the freezing blizzards of winter, and early death from the unremitting toil demanded to transform the region from a frontier into a vital part of the United States.

In the earliest stages of settlement, most people moving to this American West were young men willing to risk the privations either because of romantic delusions or else because they saw opportunity for self advancement. When these young, lonely men did get to town, some of them sought solace from prostitutes, whose life was equally difficult, for they existed in a world where they served both as victim and victimizer. For the most part such women were hardened and cynical souls, who had chosen this life out of economic necessity. They lived in cheap shacks cluttered around the saloons. They had no form of medical inspection, and venereal disease was rampant. Because of the amount of cheap liquor they consumed, the drugs many of them took, the diseases they contracted, and their hard living conditions, they usually died young, particularly from pneumonia. Most of these "soiled doves" had little compunction about rolling drunks and were filled with contempt for their customers; yet, some were surprisingly honest—and even gentle. In short, they were human.

In the past, books about the American West also could be divided into the same two classes of myth and reality—one with pasteboard characters participating in a morality play, the other reflecting a region of unremitting toil and of economic contribution to the building of America. Perhaps because of our infatuation with the horse and all this animal has come to symbolize, thousands of books of both kinds have been written about cowboys and cattlemen—with more than a few of them noting the prostitutes in the saloons they frequented.

Now a third category should be added to this list: books rehashing known facts but larded with sociological and psychological jargon and moti-

Odie B. Faulk is a distinguished Southwestern historian and a contributing editor to Chronicles.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

vated by economic prejudice against the entrepreneur. *The Real American Cowboy* and *Daughters of Joy, Sisters of Misery* are typical of such works. Writers who live in Massachusetts or Washington, DC, and whose views of the West derive from the Western movie, economic determinism, and the cloistered research library, churn out works about cowboys which refer to the occupation as a "trade fraternity." These books speak about the friendships of the bunkhouse in terms of "male bonding" and portray prostitutes as "enmeshed in a complex web of human attitudes, defined with scorn and jocularity, and circumscribed by rigid societal responses."

Publishers whose offices are congregated in the East (or, in the case of university presses, are staffed with imitators of New York houses) sign contracts with these Ivy League academicians because they all talk the same language—something that makes both of them comfortable. Theirs is a symbiotic relationship. Publishers need manuscripts to fill their spring and fall catalogs, and professors need publications to justify their nonprofessing in the classroom (that is, released time for research). Moreover, each helps reinforce the prejudices the other already has about the West, either real or mythic. Another way of saying the same thing is that I have never seen a book whose subtitle is *Prostitutes in the American East.*

These publishers and authors remind me—perhaps because most of them are from that generation—of college students of the 1960's who liked to wear blue work shirts and overalls to show their sympathy for the working class. As a friend of mine commented, "If only they had *earned* those work shirts. Those of us who grew up in them couldn't wait to get out of them." I do not believe these Eastern authors need to have worked as cowboys or prostitutes to gain an understanding of them, but a closer association than sympathetic reading and listening to academic lectures is needed to attune the writer to the regional rhythms and work patterns of the West of reality.

Let me illustrate my point with some stories.

Many years ago I was talking with an old-timer who related to me an anecdote told by his great-uncle about herding cattle in the Cherokee Outlet in the 1880's. A crew of six was working a herd when one of them, a young cowboy, was killed. His horse stepped in a hole, threw the young man, and then rolled on top of him. The crew dug a shallow grave on top of a nearby hill and gathered around it, hats in hand. After several moments of awkward silence, the foreman asked, "Anybody have anything to say?" When no one responded, the foreman told them, "Well, throw some dirt on him, and let's get back to work."

On another occasion I recall listening to a salty old cowboy in San Angelo, Texas, tell a few of his cronies about the death and funeral of one of their number. The deceased was brought into a nearby small community and properly laid out in church, dozens of his friends coming for the service. The young minister preached a long sermon, perhaps in the hope of making a few converts among people who did not normally attend church. Finally, in a fit of oratorical flight, he thundered, "Old Jake's not really dead. He's just gone to a better world." At this moment from the back of the room came a whispered comment from one of the salty—and realistic—cowboys seated there, "I've got a hundred dollars says the son of a bitch is dead."

I gained greater understanding and insight about cowboys and cattlemen from these two stories than from some two dozen years of academic study, just as I learned what prostitution must have been like from another story I heard dating from the 1890's. It involved a 17-year-old prostitute weeping because she had been working at a two-dollar establishment until a miner, in a drunken fit of amorousness, had bitten off one of her ears; this automatically had demoted her to a 50-cent-house.

I cannot recommend either of these books as good reading for anyone who really wants to know what the West of yore was truly like. The writers have uncovered no new facts, and they have disclosed no great insights. The author of a best-selling American history textbook once told me, "Show me an American history book, and I can tell you within 10 years when it was written." He meant that by examining what was emphasized in a particular text, he could tell the era from which it came by recalling what was fashionable at any given point in our history. These two books exemplify the sociological-revisionism of the 1980's and those writers intent on raising our racist/sexist/economic consciousness.

Daughters of Joy, Sisters of Misery is feminist literature designed to prove that prostitutes in the West were used by the "legal, military, church and press establishments" to "maintain their authority," while *The Real American Cowboy* tries to have us believe that cowboys, filled with racial prejudice, were "exploited by their corporate employers."

BOOKS IN BRIEF—POPULAR CULTURE

The Last Metro, directed by Francois Truffaut, edited by Mirella Jona Affron and E. Rubinstein, New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press; $25.00 (cloth); $10.00 (paper). *Touch of Evil*, directed by Orson Welles, edited by Terry Comito, New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press; $25.00 (cloth); $10.00 (paper). Great movies often have scripts, and a series to make those scripts available to students would be welcome. A poor choice of films is frustrating the value of the new "Rutgers Films in Print" series. Truffaut's meretricious *Last Metro* was shot without a script. Much of the power of Welles's brilliant *Touch of Evil* comes from Henry Mancini's score. *Caveat emptor.*

My Work in Films by Eugene Lourie, San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich; $29.95 (cloth); $16.95 (paper). A modest and chatty narrative of the career of the art director of movies that ranged from *Grand Illusion* to *Krakatoa, East of Java* will be a film buff's delight.

Seven Pillars of Popular Culture by Marshall W. Fishwick, Westport, CT: Greenwood Press; $29.95. A professor of humanities and communication studies at Virginia Polytechnic Institute brings together the fruits of a lifetime's research in a wide-ranging and learned book that discusses today's popular culture in terms borrowed from ancient Greek, including *demos* (people), *theos* (god), and *mythos*.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Gelded Age *by Allan C. Carlson*

"If the Model Boy was in either of these Sunday schools, I did not see him."

—Mark Twain

Boys Together: English Public Schools, 1800-1864 by John Chandos, New Haven: Yale University Press.

Manhood: A New Definition by Stephen A. Shapiro, New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons.

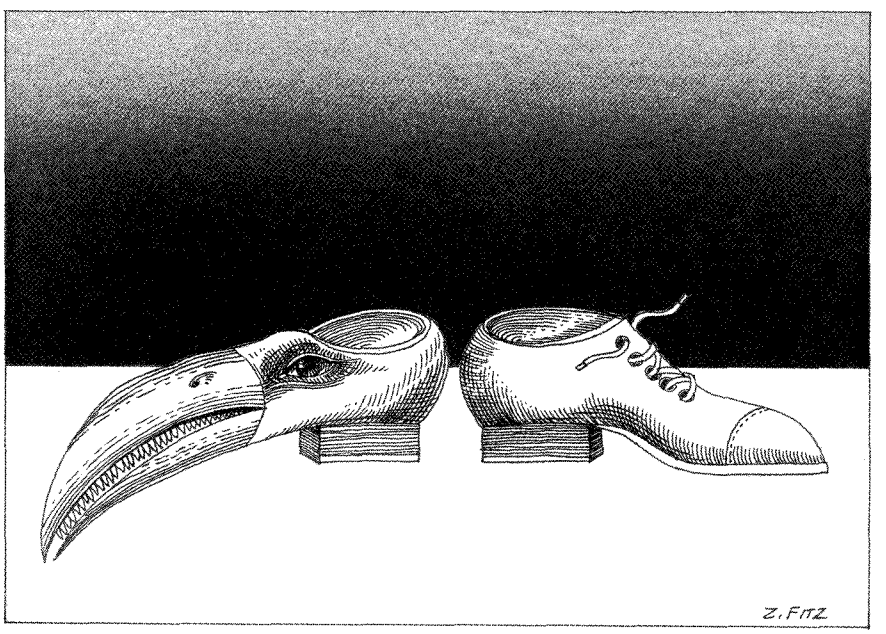
The Redundant Male: Is Sex Irrelevant in the Modern World? by Jeremy Cherfas and John Gribbin, New York: Pantheon Books.

What do men want? In the gloried 1950's, *Sports Afield* and *Rod and Gun* exemplified a male ethos resting on the quest for game by the primeval hunting band. With *Playboy*, Hugh Hefner moved the American male indoors. The plush apartment, the hi-fi, a cultivated taste for Gucci accessories and French cuisine, and a string of willing sex partners became the marks of the compleat 1960's man.

Manhood now faces another redefinition. Judging from the sheaf of new publications on the "men's question," the male of the 1980's simply aspires to equality with the new woman.

Esquire has repositioned itself as the magazine of the psychologically neutered male, seeking to frame a life-style for the nonsexist rich and famous. At the more committed level, *Changing Men*, published in Madison, Wisconsin, seeks to define "a healthy, life-loving, non-oppressive masculinity." Its regular section on "men's history" is edited, predictably, by a woman. California's *Men's Journal* effuses over "the excitement of men interacting with men, celebrating our common masculine heritage." The editors report, with straight faces, that "men are heirs to a rich heritage of myth and ritual." Meanwhile, *The Men's Studies Newsletter*, "written by and for academics," chronicles the growing field of Men's Studies, a recent outgrowth of the Women's Studies programs that are *de rigueur* on mainstream college campuses.

An old *Saturday Night Live* skit comes to mind, a talk-show spoof entitled "For Men Only," in which Dan Akroyd portrayed the curator of a new men's art museum. He showed his host the *Mona Lisa*, which, he proudly declared, "was painted by a man"; then, *The Last Supper*, also painted by "a man." The museum featured the piped-in music of Bach, Mozart, and Beethoven, "who were all men." How many Americans, I wonder, still get the joke?



Manhood, like everything else in modern times, has become the pawn of ideology. Torn from its roots in the genetic code, gender is now a plaything for clever writers with political ambitions.

The tremor began with the ideas unleashed by the French and industrial revolutions of the late 18th century. In his wonderfully entertaining book, *Boys Together*, historian John Chandos shows how class envy, the quest for political power, and evangelical religion came together to destroy the male ethos of the English public schools through the reform of 1865. Chandos focuses on Eton, Winchester, Westminster, Harrow, and Rugby, most of which began as charity schools. Over the course of the 17th century, though, these institutions were transformed into the incubators of the ruling class, places where young men from good homes were toughened and readied for their leadership roles. In the pre-reform centuries, the public schools held tightly to two distinctions: a curriculum based exclusively on Latin and Greek; and an extraordinary degree of self-government by the boys, allowing seniors or "fagmasters" to rule over juniors or "fags" with near absolute power. At Eton, 50 or more boys would be locked up each night in single dormitories, without adult supervision. Fags would tend to the senior's every need—clip their hair, fetch a candle, wash their clothes, procure illicit liquor, and so on. Fagmasters, in turn, protected their fags from the demands of other seniors.

The fag system has acquired a reputation for cruelty and sexual exploitation, reflected in the connotation of the word *fag* itself. Chandos shows, though, that fagging usually worked quite well. While sexual misadventure was not unknown among the boys, most of it took the form of heterosexual trysts with village girls, mutual mas-

Allan Carlson is executive vice president of The Rockford Institute.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

turbation, and other forms of "animal lust." True homosexuals reacted to the setting "with disgust and loathing."

Moreover, the fag system worked to shape character, identify and affirm natural moral leaders, protect weaker students from bullies, and give English boys a rite of passage into manhood that created bonds of shared experience lasting their lifetimes. The transition from fag to senior taught a lesson: "The pains and tribulations and oppressions suffered not long ago were sublimated now in retrospect into the dignity of honorable trial by ordeal, creditably endured." The schools venerated the total experience as essential to the formation of that "noblest work of God, an English gentleman."

Yet the early 19th century brought a host of critics. Most of them, Chandos shows, represented the new merchant class, persons jealous of the loyalties bred among the public schoolers and aspiring to position. David Morrice invoked the Gospels to demand the outlawing of the "corrupt influence" of "Latin and Greek authors, call them either Pagan or Classical" who were "injurious to the youthful imagination and religious principle." Morrice eventually succeeded in his protest against the annual performance of Terence's *Eunuchus* at Westminster, with the play—"the *most indecorous* of all his comedies"—suspended in 1846. Writing in the *Edinburgh Review*, another critic labeled fagging as "the only regular institution of slave labor enforced by brute force which exists in these islands." As these charges found their way into the scandalmongering press, great pressures fell onto the public schools. By mid-century, the radical social reformer and old Rugbeian T.H. Green lamented, "The spirit of the age, raving against everything that sounds like oppression, seems likely to establish a worse tyranny in public schools, as everywhere else."

The reforms of the 1860's did bring modern curricula and adult supervision to the lads. The boys' freedom, independence, and natural male community gave way to a new order, in which high-minded teachers regarded their charges as "human putty," to be molded as much alike as possible by professionals.

In the late 20th century, of course, the number of male preserves is shrinking at a more rapid pace. For example, if trends in baccalaureate and masters degrees portend the future, accounting, law, and the ministry will become female-dominated professions by this century's close. More broadly, technological innovation and the decay of family bonds continue to undermine the separate spheres that once defined manhood and womanhood.

Men, we are told, now need to become caring, compassionate, child-centered, and sensitive. They must forgo their proclivities for aggression and violence. They must become androgynous wholes. Male liberators, seeking to give the beleaguered gender new role models, have produced a voluminous literature. In his popular *A Choice of Heroes*, Marc Gerzon describes "emerging masculinities": men as healers, mediators, companions, colleagues, and nurturers. Joseph Pleck, labeled "a national treasure" by others in "the movement," argues in his *The Myth of Masculinity* that psychology, not biology, constructs masculinity; hence, "maleness" can be redefined at will. In several volumes, poet Robert Bly advocates development of the new "wild man," a vigorous and spontaneous person, contrasting well with the old-styled savage, brutal, or passive man.

Stephen Shapiro's *Manhood: A New Definition* falls into this reinterpretive effort. Like its brother volumes, the book is strong on psychosocial concepts, weak on prescription. Shapiro's favorite device is to weave old-fashioned "male" words and images into a murky, vaguely progressive agenda:

> We must recover some traditional values: respect for our forefathers, brotherhood, commitment to marital love, responsibility, sacrifice. And if it is to flourish and survive, our respect for these values cannot be based, as it was so often in the past, on submissive conformity to their false authoritarian forms but on realizing the fullness of their meaning for our personal moral development and for our democratic community life.

Such musings consume 240 pages. In the end, Shapiro says that men will recover their manhood by learning "to tolerate and then to love" alien faces, different-colored flesh, strange gods, vulnerable children, the dying elderly, power in women, and so on. Manhood "requires us to reduce injustice so that we may repair the bonds of trust." Alan Alda, call your office.

A more rigorous, equally political investigation of manhood is found in *The Redundant Male*. In their earlier collaboration, *The Monkey Puzzle*, authors Jeremy Cherfas and John Gribbin showed some ability at translating recent scientific discoveries into the vernacular. Here, they labor over the results of genetic and sociobiological research and conclude that "Men are at best parasites on women, and at worst totally redundant in the immediate evolutionary scheme." Their essential argument is that asexual reproduction is best. They look with admiration at creatures such as the dandelion and the Amazon molly (a little fish) which have made the great leap to nonsexual reproduction, or cloning, and do surprisingly well. Cherfas and Gribbin state that in "every case" where sexual reproduction still gives creatures an evolutionary advantage, this is due solely to "the intense competition for resources between the offspring of a single individual"—e.g., among the oak trees.

Relative to humans, they report that emerging cloning technologies make men unnecessary. "Sex no longer pays," and women would do better without having to bear male children. The authors do add that it might be wise to keep a small group of sexual breeders in reserve, a sort of living gene bank, on the slight chance that basic environmental conditions might change beyond the coping ability of existing technology. On a society-wide basis, though, women will soon be able to do away with the "redundant" male.

Yet their argument doesn't hold. In affirming the superiority of asexual reproduction, Cherfas and Gribbin must face the fact that the great majority of species more complex than the bacterias are sexual species, clear winners in the evolutionary race. Without complex technologies to protect them, moreover, the novel asexual creatures

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

are extremely vulnerable to rapid extinction. Sexual reproduction confers a great many long-term advantages—greater diversity, more rapid adaptation, heightened protection against disease—which the authors dance around, and in the end cannot honestly deny.

While it is probably true that advances in petri-dish conception and artificial wombs may soon allow women to choose to dispense with men altogether, it would also seem possible for *men* to use a related technology to dispense with women. These scenarios represent the war of the sexes carried to its logical, genocidal extreme. Such apocalyptic fantasies have long kept the feminists amused. The danger in our time, of course, is that the ideologues may soon have the tools to achieve their ends.

Meanwhile, outside the mega-intellectual world, men continue to follow their genetic imprints, and the rites of passage so despised by the modernists live on. Combat training endures as the male ritual most common among blue collar and red- and black-necks, despite Pentagon attempts to build an "equal opportunity" army. Street gangs grow in size and influence, overwhelming the best efforts of authorities to tame the boys in school. Even at the universities, fraternity pledgeship survives as a degenerate form of fagging, still facing the opprobrium of liberal faculties and professional administrators. Where modern institutions and ideologies have failed them, boys still seek ways of becoming men.

Lady and the Vamp *by James J. Thompson Jr.*

"No womman of no clerk is praised."

—Chaucer

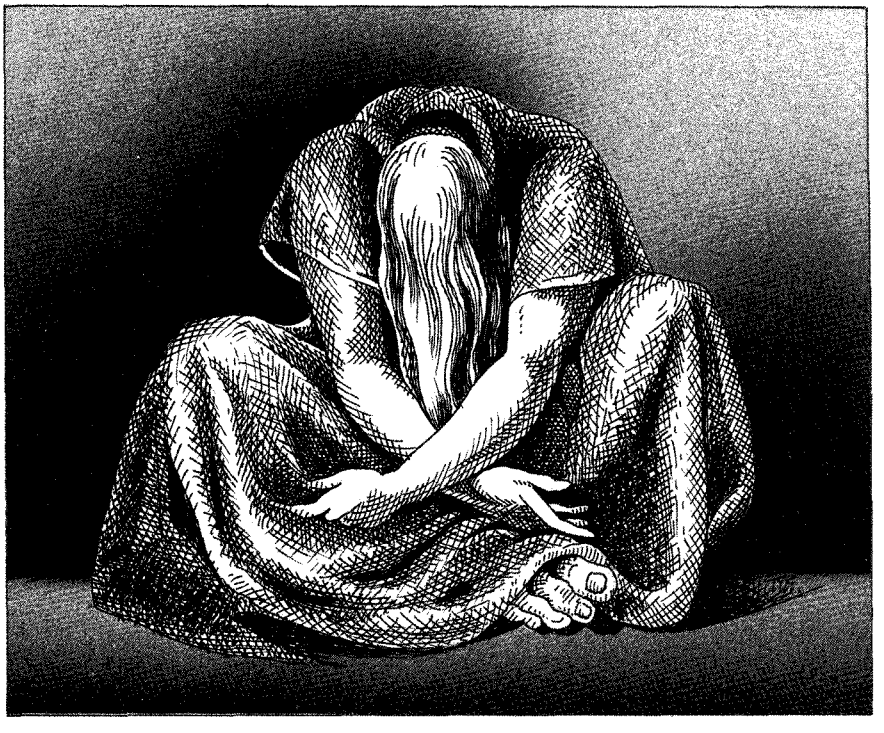
Growing Up in the 1850s: The Journal of Agnes Lee, edited by Mary Custis Lee deButts, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press; $11.95.

***Marthe*, translated by Donald M. Frame, New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich; $19.95.**

An old-fashioned historian can be forgiven for feeling a touch of empathy for the bewildered Egyptians upon whom Yahweh emptied the vessels of wrath some 3,500 years ago. The Hebrews' God plagued the Egyptians for a matter of days, but the stern Minerva who reigns over academe has tormented historians for two decades or more. Like the pullulating frogs that hopped and croaked on the banks of the Nile, a host of noisome creatures has invaded the orderly precincts of historical scholarship. Pestilence appears in many forms: Marxism, the new social history, black pride, gay consciousness, pop Freudianism, and computer analysis.

None of these has wreaked quite so much havoc as feminism. These are parlous times for the historian who clings to the once-respected craft of chronicling the achievements of statesmen, warriors, priests, and fashioners of ideas, most of whom have suffered the misfortune of maleness. Faced with this onslaught, one is tempted to adopt a siege mentality and brace for the final assault of the barbarians. But in this case, the barbarians may have something to teach us, for in spite of their procrustean ideologizing, their cant and posturing, their venomous scorn for outmoded forms of historical inquiry, the practitioners of women's history have illuminated a realm largely ignored by previous historians. That the lives of obscure women should be brought into the historian's purview is not such a radical idea after all; the pity is that the deed has been wrought too often by people whose scholarship is twisted by sexual animosity and political exigency.

The new concentration upon the daily lives of women has had at least one beneficial result: the publication of primary materials that have been either unknown or accessible only to archival moles. Neither *Growing Up in the 1850s*, the adolescent musings of Agnes Lee, nor *Marthe*, a collection of family letters that reveals the carryings-on of a *fin de siècle* French woman, contains anything especially earthshaking; this is not the stuff from



James Thompson is book review editor at New Oxford Review.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

which revisionists fabricate innovative interpretations. Both volumes do, however, open a window upon the banalities of existence in times and places—Virginia of the 1850's and France of the 1890's—whose study is often preoccupied with the unfolding of BIG EVENTS: say, for example, the Dreyfus Affair in France, or the secession crisis in Virginia. They, too, serve who grapple only with the demands of insignificant lives.

Obsessive feminists will hitch these books to their ideological wagon: Agnes Lee, in this transmogrification, emerges as the pedestaled belle of Old Virginia, and Marthe de Montbourg as the victim of repressive morality. Such reductionism ill serves both women. If she was, in fact, oppressed by patriarchy, Agnes seems ignorant of her plight, confiding to her journal the normal joys, sorrows, aspirations, and apprehensions of a young Virginian woman of her class and era. Like her father, who would soon be transformed from an obscure colonel into the hero of the Confederacy, she faces tribulation with a stoic sense of honor and duty; a Virginian of her class—whether male or female—did not whine, wallow in self-pity, or curse the gods for meting out justice imperfectly. Had she not died in 1873 at the age of 32, she would have forged in her person that combination of lace, lavender, and steel that has made the Southern woman a figure not to be pitied but to be approached with a mixture of respect, trepidation, and awe.

Frederick Brown, the eminent elucidator of French literature, remarks in the foreword to *Marthe* that "what we see of Marthe are mostly images projected by the people in whose hands her fate lies: her mother, guardian, uncle, and later, husband." Such a description will hardly suffice for a young woman who dominates an entire family's attention for a decade and who, in pursuit of sexual gratification, sets off an uproar akin to that created by a loose cannon careening about the deck of a ship awash in a moiling sea. If this Marthe is repressed, it is frightening to imagine what an unrepressed Marthe would have accomplished. Sexually active from the age of 14, she becomes pregnant by a peasant five years later and bears an illegitimate child. The family correspondence (mainly between Marthe's mother Émilie, and Émilie's brother Charles de Cerilley) begins in 1892 with the frantic search for a husband for Marthe. After repeated disappointments, Émilie settles upon Robert Caron d'Aillot, a feckless and impecunious member of the *petite noblesse*, who is willing to undertake the reformation of the wayward *fille* "into a nice wife able to take her place in a salon"; the tainted past of a handsomely dowered wife takes second place to the prospects of financial solvency.

Marthe's marriage, however, plunges her family into what her uncle calls "an ocean of muck" and "a sea of shame": Robert abuses Marthe; Émilie threatens Robert, who in turn vows to expose Marthe's "lascivious past"; Robert and Marthe engage in feverish and frequent coupling; and Marthe refuses to leave Robert because, as M. de Cerilley puts it, she has "to have it at any price." After seducing a farmhand, Marthe flees to her mother; newly liberated, she beds her farmhand again, rejects him in favor of a valet, and before her death in 1902 makes her final conquest in the person of her solicitous cousin, Henri. Feminists may view this as a tragic tale of female subjection; more properly, it is a farcical comedy compounded out of *Tom Jones*, *Moll Flanders*, *Therese Raquin*, and *Lady Chatterley's Lover*.

What distresses the de Montbourgs and de Cerilleys is not so much Marthe's rampaging wantonness, but rather her proletarian tastes in bed partners. Émilie in particular exhibits that last gambit of a decadent aristocracy, snobbery; she bemoans the "mean republican spirit" of *fin de siècle* France and decries the "egalitarian vulgarity" of the age. *Marthe* parades a cast of repellent aristocrats; greedy, grasping, and small-minded, they think only of money, the horrors of scandal, and the iniquities of a society that threatens their status. Agnes Lee, by contrast, feels no menace from the lower orders; with the best of Virginia's prewar landed gentry, she assuages the rigors of slavery with the decency demanded by *noblesse oblige*. The Lees are secure in their social position, and

THE MUSE

by Monk Gibbon

Pity my muse. I remember her when she was young.
She had the gravity of youth, its gaiety too;
Bright eyes, brown hair, a softly-speaking tongue
That gave the lie to any griefs she knew.
She was aware of God, as one is aware
Of some rich relative in a far-off land
Whom one has never met, yet year by year
Is sent off grateful messages in a copperplate hand.
What happened to her? You'd hardly know her now;
Dulled eyes; grey hair; not actually bedraggled,
Yet lacking the lustre of an unfurrowed brow.
She married Philosophic Doubt, and poor,
She daily scrubs the metaphysical floor.

Monk Gibbon was named a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature in 1950 and has served as vice president of The Irish Academy of Letters. His volumes of poetry include Wise Small Birds, For Daws to Peck At, Now We'll Forget the Windy Hill, *and* This Insubstantial Pageant. *He is also author of* The Masterpiece and the Man: Yeats As I Knew Him *(Macmillan).*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

their graceful practice of the aristocratic virtues suffuses their existence with a special poignancy, for as we—but not they—know, their world is doomed. None but a purblind apologist would mourn the passing of Marthe's class; but the Lees: now there is an aristocracy worthy of nostalgia; only the bitter reminder that Virginia's gentry flourished on a foundation of human bondage blemishes our admiration.

All was not serene and idyllic in Agnes' world, however: a nameless and free-floating guilt cursed her young life. With a moral agony worthy of a 17th-century Puritan she searches her heart for the hidden source of her unworthiness. In a burst of self-recrimination she anguishes that "my poor weak, miserable nature makes me despise myself with a force which no language of mine can describe." Even a wrenching emotional experience that leads to confirmation in the Episcopal Church does not completely staunch the flow of guilt; only months after her conversion she cries out: "O May I love Jesus more, my heart is so hard & cold." Agnes Lee writhed under an almost morbid sense of spiritual inadequacy that seems to have warped her psyche. But is such agony really "warped"? Is not the Christian soul always tormented by an acute sensitivity to its own imperfection? Is it not appalled by the glaring blotch that compels it to quail before the ineffable purity of the stainless Christ?

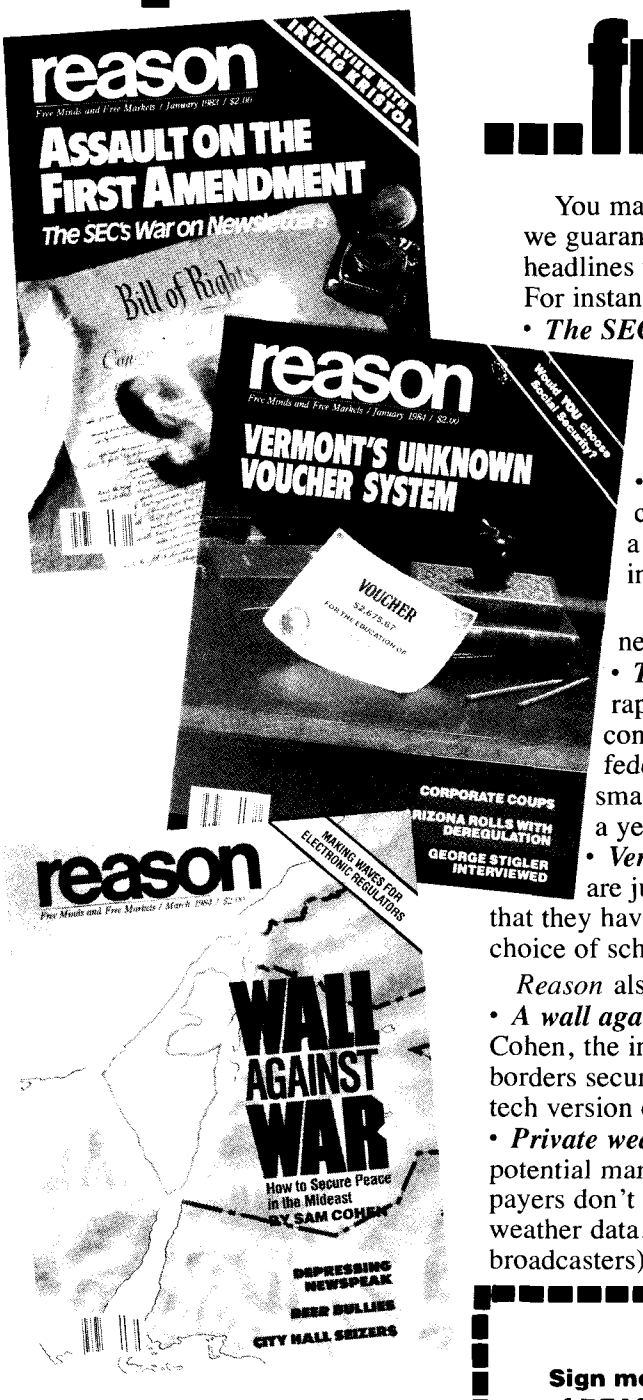
Marthe de Montbourg gave evidence of a spiritual condition more prized by Americans of the late 20th century. Her letters express no guilt or remorse for her sins; she mainly longs for a man who will prod her to multiple ecstacies. Émilie's judgment upon her daughter is close to the mark: "But this creature thinks only of eating, drinking, and sensual amours!" Yet there is something else. Louise Galouret, Marthe's faithful companion in the last year of Marthe's life, writes to Charles de Cerilley: "She was esteemed and loved by all those who came near her, and in the eyes of God she may perhaps have been greater than many of those whose religion is so hypocritical. She was frank, loyal, and charitable, qualities that are rarely met with."

Each will make of Marthe de Montbourg and Agnes Lee what he will. To the feminist, they are victims; to the Freudian, case studies; to the Marxist, members of the oppressor class. In some sense, they may have been all of these, but they were something more as well. Marthe sinned grievously, her unsatiated compulsions driving her into fornication and adultery; Agnes, too, transgressed, not in matters of the flesh but in a despairing reluctance to trust in grace. Mildred Lee, Agnes' younger sister, kept her own journal, and in 1884, 11 years after Agnes' demise, she described her sister's deathbed scene. "I managed," Mildred writes, "to repeat the Lord's Prayer, & she joined in at '*Forgive* us our trespasses,' murmuring 'ah that's the part.'" Whatever Marthe and Agnes suffered as females in a male-dominated society, women's liberation would not have solved their problems. As Agnes Lee realized as she lay dying, only divine forgiveness suffices. Truly that is the part.

Plains Poetry Journal is committed to the theory that poetry is *art* and art is *made*. It's the most refreshing concoction of **real** poetry you'll find between the soft pages of a "little" magazine, by talented well-known and un-known poets determined to use classical poetic traditions in vigorous, compelling new ways. Quarterly; $3.50/issue, $14/year. Heartening editorial manifesto for SASE. **Plains Poetry Journal, P.O. Box 2337, Bismarck, ND 58502.**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Expect the unexpected ...from reason



You may not agree with everything you read in *Reason*—but we guarantee you won't be bored. *Reason*'s editors look behind the headlines to dig out stories that don't even occur to other media. For instance:

- ***The SEC versus the First Amendment.*** For decades the Securities and Exchange Commission has been subjecting financial newsletters to licensing and censorship. Shortly after *Reason* blew the whistle, a federal court ruled that the SEC was violating the First Amendment.
- ***Defense rigs the tests.*** A detailed *Reason* exposé of conflict of interest in the testing of new weapons led to a "60 Minutes" broadcast and legislation to set up an independent testing office.

Reason's nose for news extends to little-noticed *good* news, as well. Among our recent discoveries:

- ***Towering entrepreneurs.*** Last year *Reason* discovered a rapidly growing industry—private firms that operate airport control towers for *half* what it costs the usual operator, the federal government. If private operation were extended to small airports alone, taxpayers could save *$60 million* a year.
- ***Vermont's vouchers.*** Most people think education vouchers are just a gleam in Milton Friedman's eye, but *Reason* found that they have been used in Vermont for decades, giving parents a choice of schools.

Reason also turns up provocative proposals for change:

- ***A wall against war for Israel.*** In this controversial article, Sam Cohen, the inventor of the neutron bomb, proposed making Israel's borders secure by means of a permanent radiation barrier—a high-tech version of an electric fence.
- ***Private weather forecasting.*** An economic journalist surveyed the potential market for weather forecasts and concluded that the taxpayers don't need to keep government in the business of providing weather data. Specific customers (airlines, shippers, newspapers, broadcasters) can and should pay for the information they value.

Who writes for *Reason*? Some of America's best writers and most incisive thinkers—including Tom Bethell, Edith Efron, James Oberg, Alan Reynolds, William Tucker, and Walter Williams, to name a few. It's no wonder a recent survey showed that *Reason* is America's fastest-growing magazine of ideas.

You can try *Reason* now at 40 percent off the regular price—only $15 a year. Just send in the coupon—and start expecting the unexpected in *your* mailbox.

REASON, Box 27977, San Diego, CA 92128

Sign me up for a year of REASON.

☐ My $15 payment is enclosed.

☐ Please bill me for $15.

Charge my credit card.

☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard

Card Number _____

Exp. Date _____

Signature _____

YOUR NAME _____
(Please print)

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ **STATE** _____ **ZIP** _____

Please allow six weeks for delivery. Add $8.00 if delivery is outside North America ($36.00 for airmail).
Canadians: Postal money orders in U.S. dollars only.

2026

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

COMMENDABLES

Companion to Coleridge

by Andrew Shaughnessy

***A Portrait of Charles Lamb* by David Cecil, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons; $19.95.**

In graceful prose not unworthy of his subject, the distinguished English biographer Lord David Cecil paints an endearing portrait of "St. Charles," as Thackeray was later to call Lamb. Saint he was, certainly, and sinner, too. The death of Lamb's mother at the hands of his intermittently mad sister, Mary, caused him lasting grief and was permanently to color his future career with melancholy. He appears at once, upon this dreadful domestic upheaval, to have resigned any hopes or ambitions he may have entertained for himself; from that time forward his life is one of selfless devotion to his unhappy sister.

In his earliest years Lamb suffered a great deal from night fears produced by his vivid imagination. He was sickly as a boy, laboring as he did under the twin impediments of an awkward gait and a persistent stammer, not qualities calculated to win friends among the unruly schoolboys common in the England of the late 18th century; yet, he proved to be popular with his fellows, and his childhood was, on the whole, a happy one. By a stroke of good fortune, Mr. Samuel Salt, who employed Lamb's father as a scrivener, happened to be a governor of Christ's Hospital and arranged for young Charles to be enrolled as a pupil at that venerable institution. There—in the antique costume still donned by the scholars of his day—Lamb first met the youthful Coleridge who was to exert such a profound influence over him. As David Cecil puts it: "Getting to know Coleridge was to prove the most important event in Charles Lamb's school life." He goes on to describe the precocious philosopher exercising his uncommon talents among his admiring schoolfellows. "An archangel a little damaged," was Lamb's quaint description of Coleridge long afterwards. That description seems perfectly to capture the essence of the man whose genius produced *The Ancient Mariner*.

Indeed Lamb was later to become closely connected with several of the leading figures of the English Romantic movement: Coleridge, Wordsworth, Southey, Hazlitt, and De Quincey were all, at one time or another, to be found at Lamb's literary gatherings in his chambers at the Inner Temple. Lamb himself, of course, never was a writer by profession. The constant attention required by Mary meant that he was compelled to hold regular employment, and thus he passed the greater portion of his life behind a desk in the offices of the East India Company in London.

For most of us, I suspect, Charles Lamb is more familiar today as Elia the essayist than Lamb the poet or Lamb the playwright. As a literary form, the essay proved to be the ideal medium of expression for his talents, yet for years he poured his energies into producing poems and plays that never caught the public's imagination. At one point a play of his was performed at a theater in Drury Lane; but when the audience began to hiss its disapproval, Lamb joined in for fear he might be discovered as the playwright. The essays are characterized by a charm and simplicity unmatched in English letters. Liberally sprinkled with archaisms, Lamb's prose reveals his intense admiration for the poets and dramatists of the 17th century. Indeed, Lamb did much to restore interest in many a neglected figure from that age.

In the pages of David Cecil's readable study, Lamb emerges as a man at once lovable and capable of exciting our pity. Yet pity he never looked for; by his own exertions he provided for Mary and himself and never was dependent on the charity of his friends. Certainly he suffered much from lowness of spirits brought on by Mary's increasingly frequent bouts of insanity which caused him to indulge a fondness for strong drink. "You must die first," he observed once to Mary. But all his unselfish planning came to nothing—Mary outlived him by 10 years.

A *Portrait of Charles Lamb* is by no means a complete study of its subject: for a fuller work we may turn to that of E.V. Lucas. As an introduction to the essential features of Lamb's life, though, it is excellent and ought surely to promote in us a desire to read more of that delightful writer.

Andrew Shaughnessy is assistant editor of The University Bookman.

Pedantry and Progress

***Basil Lanneau Gildersleeve: An American Classicist*, edited by Ward W. Briggs Jr. and Herbert W. Benario, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.**

He wrote one of the most distinctive and original prose styles of his time, paralleling the techniques of his Yankee contemporary, Henry James, anticipating those of Pound and Eliot. But he used that style to write Greek grammars and commentaries on obscure Greek and Latin poets and page after page of "brief mentions," mini-reviews, of pedantic monographs. Like Browning's Grammarian, he devoted his life to "settl[ing] *Hoti's* business . . . and properly bas[ing] *Oun*," but (an important difference) he never "decided not to Live but to Know." He taught the first research seminar in America's first research university (Johns Hopkins) and edited his field's first scholarly journal, but he limped as he entered the seminar room from a wound he suffered while fighting for the South in the War of 1860-65. At a time when graduate education was not usually available for women, he opened his seminar to the ambitious M. (=Martha) Cary Thomas, the future president of Bryn Mawr College (most famous for her boast, "Only our failures *marry*"). Yet he reprinted his diatribe against Reconstruction and wrote an impassioned defense of the Southern cause for the *Atlantic* as late as the 1890's.

Now nine classical scholars have written essays in celebration of B.L. Gildersleeve. This is the first book de-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

voted to him, and these essays tell us why. The study of Gildersleeve requires expertise in Greek philology, the history of education in the United States, the social and political history of America on either side of the Civil War, the development of American literature, to name only some of the more important topics. In addition, we feel that envious emotion Pericles described in the Funeral Oration: we find it hard to believe that the men of the past were so superior to our contemporaries.

Yet the Gildersleeve archive at Johns Hopkins, now at last cataloged and cross-referenced, lures the scholar. In his own day, before World War I, Gildersleeve was a towering figure. European scholars put meetings with him in their memoirs. In our time, he survives as a scholarly presence, yes, but more, as a symbol of the possibility of combining scholarly achievement and creative spark, of being a successful teacher and also a brave and independent man. While so many fields in the humanities seem to have lost their moorings, some of America's classicists have not forgotten where they came from. Following Yeats's injunction, they "cast their minds on other days, that we in future days may be" creative and vital.

Getting America Right

The Source by Fred Chappell, Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press; $6.95.

Winter Oysters by Brendan Galvin, Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press.

Poems From the Sangamon by John Knoepfle, Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press; $8.95.

The New World: An Epic Poem by Frederick Turner, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

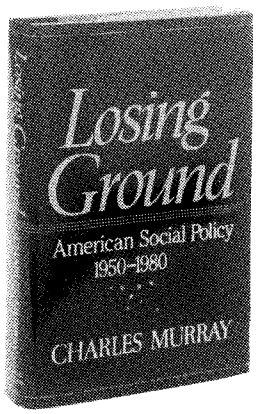
The Unlovely Child by Norman Williams, New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

American novelists no longer write about America. That, at least, was the judgment of many foreign writers who attended the recent PEN Conference. It would be hard to make the same complaint about our poets. In fact, it is hard to escape the feeling that a good many American poets are engaged in an exploration, a rediscovery of the *terra cognita* of American history.

These four volumes cover at least three regions of the U.S.: New England, the South, and the Midwest. Norman Williams appears to be the best traveler. His verses take him to Vermont, Kansas, Virginia, and indeed, all the way to Spain and Portugal, but his most striking pieces are Midwestern, as "The Genius of Small-Town America":

> Each spring another crop of
> debt is sown,
> And, though agencies attach
> the land,
> Outbuildings, crops and
> unborn young, still
> The beak-nosed men walk head-up
> and proud,
> Convinced, against all evidence,
> that what
> They've planted, built or reared
> is theirs,
> And that, come the plague
> or Democrats,
> They will die as they have lived,
> that is
> In their good time, just when
> and how they choose.

If Williams takes an unromantic view of the prairie states, he can still find a kind of beauty in its twilight, "when the scent of alfalfa mingles with / the odor



DOES WELFARE HURT THE POOR?

LOSING GROUND

by Charles Murray

This profoundly influential book explains how the welfare state not only failed to help the poor, but often made things worse for the disadvantaged.

Murray's breakthrough work has had explosive impact on discussions of social policy in the '80s, and the reverberations will echo beyond the decade. This is the book social democrat Michael Harrington has called "dangerous," while such conservatives as Milton Friedman, William Buckley, Jack Kemp and Patrick Buchanan have hailed it as "brilliant."

NOW AVAILABLE IN PAPERBACK

from LAISSEZ FAIRE BOOKS
Order #CU0572 $10.95

ORDER TOLL-FREE
1-800-238-2200
ext 500
Charge your Visa or MasterCard
• Continental U.S. •
24 hours a day • 7 days a week

MONEY BACK GUARANTEE
If for any reason you are dissatisfied with any book, just return it within 30 days for a refund

Send your order to:
LAISSEZ FAIRE BOOKS, Dept. CAC
532 Broadway, 7th Floor, NY 10012

Please send me _____ copies of **Losing Ground** (order #CU0572) for $10.95 each, plus $1.00 postage & handling ($2.00 for foreign orders).

☐ Send me your 32-page catalog of books on liberty.

☐ My check or money order is enclosed for $_____.

☐ Please bill my ☐ Visa ☐ Master Card.

Acct. No. _____

Expir. Date _____

Signature _____

Name (Please Print) _____

Address _____

City / State / Zip _____

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of cows and casseroles." This first book is an extraordinary accomplishment for a young New England lawyer who has sounded, as Anthony Hecht observes, "a uniquely American note."

Brendan Galvin is another Yankee poet. *Winter Oysters*, his fourth book, has been out since 1983, but it is not too late to do justice to the freshness and vigor of Galvin's landscapes. It is one of the very few volumes of recent verse I find myself returning to, now and then, for refreshment—like a well-loved cabin in the north woods. The title poem captures something I had thought would always elude the versifier's art—the experience of eating oysters you have gathered in the winter:

> . . . This
> is how we like them, not
> summer-thin and weepy tourist
> fare, but hale as innkeepers,
> their liquor clear, fat with
> plankton that thrives under a
> glaze drifting just below green
> water, and without any lemon
> sundrip or condiment but a
> dash of bourbon to punctuate
> each salty imperative.

At their worst, Galvin's poems occasionally descend to the picturesque, the merely descriptive (I am reminded a little of John Clare), but he has a way of leaping from these needlepoint details up to panoramic glimpses. Going from a description of a mockingbird's song, he proceeds to observe:

> This business of getting
> the world right
> isn't for dilettantes;
> when the voices fill you,
> you must say nothing wrong,
> but follow them back
> through the day, going phrase
> by phrase over hills. . . .

—lines which say more about poets than mockingbirds.

With all the good things to say about Galvin's verse, I cannot help wishing he would turn from his short unmetrical lines to rhythmical forms that had more of the quality we expect from lyric verse. His rhetorical phrasing is almost flawless, but the human heart beats to the simple cadences of the drum, and in all the rhythmical systems known in the world, there is none that is not based on a simple alternation of strong and weak. Still, Galvin's lines seem to work, and there is not much point complaining to a man who has done us a kindness.

The same criticism applies even more to John Knoepfle, whose lines strike at least one reader as stiffer and less responsive than Galvin's—something like an inexpensive fly rod. Knoepfle still manages to write ambitiously about the Illinois countryside and succeeds in conveying a mythic sense of the past: British troops, Kickapoo Indians, Lincoln, Father Marquette—all make their appearance in his lyric "saga" of the Sangamon River.

Frederick Turner's science fiction epic is the most ambitious exploration in verse that has been seen in years. Turner cannot be praised too highly for this attempt to restore the breadth and scope of epic, and it was a stroke of genius to liberate his story from the ordinary by setting it not in the past but in the future. There is enough action and drama for an adventure novel, and the occasional passages of philosophical reflection are worth reading as essays on the problems of contemporary America.

The New World's vices spring directly from its virtues. Science fiction gives Turner the freedom to reintroduce heroism and magic, but it also frees him from the duty to confront our common experience. Really successful epic poems like the *Iliad*, the *Aeneid*, *Beowulf*, and even the *Lusiads* all celebrate a nation's heroic past. They are more than stories, more than histories; great epic is almost always a religious attempt to express the character and destiny of a people. The material must be traditional, because it must be perceived as true. None of this works when you are making it up as you go along.

Turner's vision of the future has something in common with Percy's *Love in the Ruins*. Both portray a Balkanized America of fundamentalist reactionaries against urban decadents. For Turner, however, the heroes are a warrior caste of libertarian humanists engaged in a war against the Christians. If Professor Turner stays long enough at UT—Dallas, he might discover that the moral majority is not quite what he imagines it to be, but he might have to leave campus for that.

Frederick Turner's experiment is all the more significant because he has recently been calling for a restoration of formal rhythm. In an important essay in *Poetry*, he and a neurologist coauthor argued that rhythmical poetry was able to integrate the two halves of the brain in a way that neither prose nor free verse could. Some parts of *The New World* are written in something approaching blank verse; the rest, alas, is "based on an enjambed long line divided by a caesura, as is appropriate for epic poetry." Turner cites *Sir Gawaine*, the *Iliad*, and the *Aeneid* as parallels, but neither Vergil nor Homer invented their verse forms, and it is doubtful that their audience had as much trouble hearing the rhythm as I did with:

> These are the Mad Counties of
> Vaniah which have vowed
> to carry the Gospel of Christ by
> the force of their arms
> and the fire of their
> knighthood to all unbelievers
> and heretics.

The second line is the only one, I should guess, that strikes a reader the first time; with the others you have to know how many beats are *supposed* to be there and then go back and fit it in. Turner's lines, at their worst, are almost as slovenly as Lattimore's translations of Homer, which struck one reviewer as a fly trying to get out of a bottle.

Still, there's no point in complaining. What small hope we have for the future of American verse is bound up with a handful of younger poets like Turner and Fred Chappell. Chappell's *Castle Tzingal* is the exception proving the rule, since unlike the rest of Chappell's output, it is not about North Carolina or even America. It is, like *The New World*, a narrative fantasy—a fairy tale of decadence and deceit. A homunculus begins and ends the tale, a creature that "had no childhood except an ignorance of politics and gossip." He is set to spy on the hapless queen "stolen away to be the wife of an iron and fruitless man . . . a petty Mahomet" in a world that "hates the good." It is, Chappell concludes, "a story as dark and tangled as the shoal of stormcloud mangled."

Castle Tzingal has been described as an allegory on the triumph of poetry over the nightmare of human evil, but the poems collected in *Source* are a testament to that power. One small example, "Here":

> Burdened with diadem, the
> Queen Anne's lace overhangs
> the ditch.
> The lace is full of eyes,
> cold eyes
> That draw a cold sky into
> their spheres.
> The ditch twinkles now the
> rain has stopped.
> And the ground begins to
> puff and suck
> With little holes. A man could
> live down here forever,
> Where his blood is.

The volume ends with a sequence that includes poems on the end of the world, the Crucifixion, and "Forever

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Mountain," a prayer for his late father that plays delicately on the biblical associations of North Carolina mountains:

> I see my father has gone to climb
> Easily the Pisgah Slope, taking
> the time
> He's got a world of. . . .
> He is alone, except what voices
> out of time
> Come to his head like bees to
> the bee-tree crown,
> The voices of former life as
> indistinct as heat.

On principle, I don't believe in talking, much less writing, about what a poem is supposed to mean, as if only the poet were as smart as I am. And ol' Fred, the narrator of *Midquest*, is the last man on earth I'd make an exception for. (TF)

IN FOCUS

Stage Props & Program Notes

by Raymond J. Pentzell

The Plays of Eugene O'Neill: A New Assessment **by Virginia Floyd, New York: Frederick Ungar; $24.50.**

Eugene O'Neill's life was a purgatory, as he never ceased informing us. His final plays, those written or revised from 1939 on, leave us with a vision of him plodding at last toward the top of that inverted mountain, the man emerging from his lifelong torments and the artist from his befuddlements. O'Neill is unique among American dramatists in having had a long, continually challenging career and in actually learning his art as a result: his last plays are of course his best. In comparison to them, only *The Emperor Jones* and *The Hairy Ape*, out of all the pieces churned forth between 1913 and 1934, can give a clear-eyed playgoer the slightest inkling of what all the fuss was once about. A half-dozen truly remarkable plays out of 50 written may seem inefficient, like the ratio of shot footage to finally edited film in a Hollywood movie, but who are we, after the fact, to complain?

Still, purgatory (as I remember my catechism) is not only for the searing away of unrepented sinfulness but also for "the temporal punishment still due to sin already forgiven," the idea being that a sin's ongoing harm to other people continues to deserve some retribution. In this light, O'Neill may yet stand in need of the prayers of the faithful, for his career, though exemplary in its perseverance and final accomplishment, has continued to serve as a model for the most baleful of our dramaturgical vices, the confusion of artistic production with confessional, self-serving autobiography. Every week, year in and year out, every playreader of every theatrical company groans under a new pile of scripts revealing "How My Mother (My Father, Capitalism, the Church, a Small Town) Made Me a Rebel (Homosexual, Sensitive Artist, Alcoholic, Nymphomaniac, Vegetable)" and "What It's *Really* Like to Be a Jew (Negro, Irishman, Italian, Southerner, Lett, Playwright, Inmate, etc.)." Moreover, at least until the passing away of Beck and Malina, American drama remained infected by that other of O'Neill's bad examples, Nietzschean gasbaggery about "Oneness" with more or less everything. O'Neill's shade still needs indulgences.

And, yes, his work still fascinates us, on every level of generality or pedantry. If you want to know (let us just suppose you *might*) how many characters in O'Neill's oeuvre ever pulled a gun, you can find out in Virginia Floyd's *The Plays of Eugene O'Neill: A New Assessment*, on page 557. If your mad interest lies in counting the characters described by stage directions as looking like O'Neill himself (or like one of his parents, or like brother Jamie, or like an old shipmate or a onetime drinking buddy), you can track that information easily through the play-by-play entries in this handy handbook. A virtual concordance to the 50 completed—and fistfuls of "projected"—plays, Floyd's little book is a most useful addition to the five- or six-foot shelf of O'Neilliana by now available to all of us caught by that brooding, awkward, overreaching, self-lacerating, windy, honest, and impressive monument of American drama. Floyd has put together a catalog (lacking, however, a decent bibliography) of plot-summaries, recurring "motifs" of character and theme, first productions and copyright dates, and references to O'Neill's workaday notebooks and rough drafts.

It is by no means "A New Assess-

In the forthcoming issue of *Chronicles*:

Amber Waves of Grain

"Probably the poet was never the substantial friend the farmer was looking for. Still he has proved a better friend than the scientist and the government expert. He has generally shown admiration rather than contempt for the farmer's personal capacities, and if his advice has not always been useful, at least it has not been deadly."

—from "The Poet Behind the Plow"
by Fred Chappell

ALSO

Clyde Wilson defends the Southern farmer against his critics

E. Christian Kopff makes a video tour of the boondocks

Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn discovers the American bishops have asses' ears

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ment"; it is scarcely even criticism. Floyd researched and annotated O'Neill's hitherto unavailable "idea" notebooks in Yale's Beineke Library for *Eugene O'Neill at Work* (Ungar, 1981), two years after having edited a collection of critical essays on O'Neill for the same publisher. Her close familiarity with her subject is obvious; it makes possible her latest book's particular virtues. But her "assessments" are the same old inflated impressions of O'Neill's accomplishment prior to his 1930's withdrawal-and-return, and the same old biographical biases, by which the early and middle plays are graded according to the degree in which they "reveal" O'Neill's own family, to that extent "prefiguring" his late masterpiece, *Long Day's Journey Into Night*.

Floyd, it is true, employs other —albeit rubbery—yardsticks of value, but the one thing they never measure is that which most needs measuring and which is, by sensitive critical acumen, measurable: the adequacy of a play's "language" (including its visual signs) to its evidently intended meanings and to its temporal and affective design. This has always been *the* O'Neill problem, often noted, rarely addressed. It comes as no surprise that Floyd, in her own banal, repetitious, and cliché-clogged prose, turns out to be unequal not only to the effort but even to locating the problem. For that, I recommend Jean Chothia's *Forging a Language* (Cambridge, 1979). The book is not entirely successful, but it remains the best try since Francis Fergusson (in a *Hound and Horn* essay of January 1930) articulated O'Neill's difficulty in the starkest terms.

But all that this means, finally, is that Floyd's book is mistitled. As, say, *The Plays of Eugene O'Neill: An Informational Survey*, it is still well worth having.

Raymond J. Pentzell is chairman of the department of theater and speech at Hillsdale College.

An Untimely End

Family and Nation **by Daniel P. Moynihan, New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich; $12.95.**

There used to be two Daniel P. Moynihans. One wrote interesting essays on the foibles and pitfalls of crafting public policy. While seldom mistaken for a rigorous social scientist, this Moynihan had a gift for translating the esoteric findings of the research sociologists into the vernacular. He saw through the pretentions of political hubris and could always be counted on to acknowledge and work from raw reality, however distasteful it might be to progressive sentiments. At times, he even exhibited considerable moral courage, as his pursuit of the truth led him to unpopular conclusions (e.g., the famed "Moynihan report" on the breakdown of the "Negro family").

The other Moynihan was a Democratic Senator from New York. This Moynihan regularly caved in to the standard pressure groups that bedevil the modern Politicus Democraticus. When not on a legislative binge, this Moynihan, with all the gloomy sincerity of a man with a hangover, would fall back on the pieties of moral relativism: judge not, lest ye be judged. This Moynihan turned with particular vehemence on social conservatives, who dared give moral and political preference to traditional institutions.

In *Family and Nation*, Mr. Hyde has won out over Dr. Jekyll; the political beast has triumphed over the moral, empirical man. Moynihan clearly acknowledges the ongoing tragedy of family disintegration in America and outlines the chilling consequences. In the end, though, he surrenders his soul to the behavioral and feminist harpies. Their victory is America's loss.

The Eyes of Adam

by Carl C. Curtis

Giacometti: A Biography **by James Lord, New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $30.00.**

Alberto Giacometti was almost a living caricature of *The Modern Artist*. Such a judgment would strike his biographer as unfair, but it cannot be helped. The popular mind has formed some definite ideas about how an artist behaves: he is above all shabby—wearing clothes he might have slept in, spattered with paint (or caked with dust), badly in need of a haircut and a good night's sleep; he drinks and smokes too much, and whores with reckless abandon; he lives in rat- or roach-infested quarters that should have been razed years ago; he is as lazy as he is untalented. Giacometti not only looked the part of the 20th-century artist, his spindly sculptures would strike most casual observers as something a talented kindergartener would make out of PlayDoh.

I do not know whether we can dismiss this popular conception on the grounds that the hoi polloi do not understand great art; sometimes they understand it much better than art critics would like to admit. At the same time it would be a mistake to simply dismiss Giacometti as another example of modern art's apotheosis of the worthless. For one thing, he was a man of considerable integrity. He broke away from the Surrealist movement at a time when he might have become one of its presiding figures, because he did not believe Surrealism served his vision of art any longer. It hardly mattered to him that he ran the risk of being excommunicated from the Parisian art community; he insisted upon pursuing his new purpose, to paint truthfully from nature (a goal abhorrent to the Surrealists).

This same unwillingness to compromise led him to end his agreement with the art dealers Aimé and Guiguite Maeght at the height of their successful association, after they had humiliated Louis Clayeux, Giacometti's friend and the prime mover of their operation. And though his adherence to a code of shabbiness often provokes laughter, his stance is preferable to the humbuggery of some of the other giants of 20th-century art and literature who cashed in on their fame while pretending to disdain bourgeois morality (one thinks of Picasso and Sartre). Giacometti lived in the same ill-heated and poorly plumbed studio at Montparnasse for 35 years, until his death in 1965.

Then there is his art. Despite his current high reputation, it will be the task of future generations to decide the value of his work. Whatever that decision may be, Giacometti pointed the way for other artists to concentrate their attention on the human figure. He was no preacher and never would have dreamed of founding a new school; but his example is there for those who will take it. All in all this was a healthy development.

For all that, one cannot shake the nagging sense that there is something wrong with Giacometti, something defective in his deepest motives. Lord makes the point over and over again that Giacometti's post-Surrealist goal was "to look at nature as if art had not existed, to see reality with an eye innocent of preconception," as it were, with the eyes of Adam. Lord admits that this is impossible and that Giacometti knew it, but he never appears to have the slightest notion that such an endeavor might be perverse. No man can see as Adam saw because no man, except Adam, can be first; each succeeding

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

man sees, strictly speaking, not what Adam saw but *through* what Adam saw, through a lens of language, tradition, and human association. To want more is to aspire to be other than man. Existential, phenomenological—call it what you will—it means the loss of the human and the normal. There lies the heresy and perhaps the key to Giacometti's peculiar integrity as well. In a sense, normality was alien to him.

James Lord has written an intriguing and highly sympathetic biography of an elusive man whose elusiveness is perhaps best seen in his art. But Lord does not seem to realize that art cannot survive on the terms Giacometti formulated and served so doggedly. The exigencies of art call for a different aesthetic and a different kind of artist, a man somehow content with what he fundamentally is, who retains, instead of discarding, his human traditions, and tries to give his vision form through them. One wonders what Giacometti's sculptures and paintings would have looked like if he had tried to see with such vision. All we know is that he did not.

Carl C. Curtis is assistant professor of English at Liberty University.

Selling Out the Kids

by Edward D. Snow Jr.

Pricing the Priceless Child: The Changing Social Value of Children **by Viviana A. Zelizer, New York: Basic Books.**

Most parents, especially those with teenagers, know the increasing *costs* of having children, but in *Pricing the Priceless Child*, Viviana Zelizer investigates the declining economic *value* of American children during the past century. Zelizer charts this decline from 1870-1930, noting the simultaneous increase in the sentimental value of children. She notes that, starting in 1860, the economic value of American children increased dramatically because rapid industrialization opened new factory occupations for poor children. Progressive reformers, however, recoiled at the concept of the economically "useful" child and were eventually able to convince their fellow citizens that children should be economically "worthless," but emotionally "priceless."

It is to Zelizer's credit that she recognizes the priority of moral and cultural movements over economic forces, but she fails to explain adequately the internal dynamics of the reform movements she examines. She fails, for example, to analyze the religious and scriptural teachings about children that inspired many reformers. It is remarkable, also, that Zelizer could devote so much attention to the industrial revolution, child insurance, wrongful child death laws, and adoption practices in documenting the changing attitudes toward child labor and yet treat the push for a "family wage" only in passing, and then with derision as a plot by greedy capitalists and oppressive patriarchs trying to perpetuate the "cult of true womanhood."

For Progressive reformers trying to liberate women and children from factories and mines, where they performed dangerous and tedious labor for low wages, no goal was more important than the establishment of a "family wage," a single income sufficient for a man to support his wife and children in modest comfort. Reformers recognized that real wages would never rise as long as entire families were forced to compete against each other. For several decades the family-wage movement succeeded in shaping legislation and cultural norms so that virtually all children and most women were taken out of the factory, while married men were generally paid more than the few women who remained in the workforce, even when women did the same work. Much of the family-wage system was voluntary, however, and when in the 1950's women began to enter the workforce in great numbers, the legal and social constraints holding the family-wage system together quickly crumbled. Today, some fear that the constraints on child labor will be the next to go. Some analysts credibly argue that the collapse of the family-wage system has contributed to the dramatic increase in social and domestic problems in America, and they argue for at least a partial restitution—perhaps through tax reform.

Curiously, Zelizer's laudable ability to understand the interplay between the economic, political, moral, cultural forces in the 1870-1930 debate over child labor fails her when she turns to examine the contemporary scene. She seems oblivious to the rapid decline of the American family in recent decades and to the need for political and cultural initiatives to reverse this trend. Instead, she smiles kindly on the current feminist egalitarian model of family life, calmly accepting the increasing presence of single and working mothers in the workplace. She argues that established family roles can change and that the demise of the full-time housewife may create a part-time "househusband" and "housechild." She will not admit that the unbridled pursuit of money and career by many women and men, at the expense of their families, has caused many of our most serious contemporary social problems.

Zelizer is right to praise the Progressive foes of child labor for upholding "social, moral, and sacred values" against the "rationalization and commodification of the world." But so long as she remains unwilling to confront contemporary threats to the family, including careerist feminism, she will only reinforce those forces that are slowly making modern America as hostile to humane child-rearing as were the most squalid company towns of the Gilded Age.

Edward Snow is press secretary for Congressman James V. Hansen (R-UT).

CASTRO, ISRAEL AND THE PLO

by David Kopilow

The Cuban American National Foundation, Inc.

"... it must now finally and frankly be asked: what has the actual progression of communist regimes in the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, no less than Cuba, meant for the demise or diminution of Jewish existence as a visible entity?"

IRVING LOUIS HOROWITZ, Rutgers University

The relationship between Cuba and Israel since the Castro revolution; the diplomatic break with Israel; and Castro's growing ties with the PLO are documented in this 48-page study.

Copies available for $2.00 from:

Cuban American National Foundation
1000 Thomas Jefferson Street, N.W.,
Suite 601
Washington, D.C. 20007

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Walden Pond Socialists

by Herbert London

***An Environmental Agenda for the Future*; Edited by Robert Cahn; Agenda Press; Washington, DC.**

Nietzsche's comment that "the enemy of truth is not lies but convictions" comes to mind while reading *An Environmental Agenda for the Future*, a collection of statements by leaders of major environmental organizers. In a book of scatter-shot propositions, a few hits are inevitable: the contributors are surely right to criticize misuse of resources and to recommend that some pristine land should be set aside for parks. But deciding what constitutes misuse and how much land should be allocated for parks is actually much harder than these self-righteous environmentalists seem to realize.

Occasionally environmentalist convictions verge on absurdity. For example, one contributor sees "no inevitable significant conflict . . . between economic strength and environmental protection." If our economy were entirely a matter of hairdressers and beauticians and we had no smokestack industries, this might be a plausible assertion. But Japan's best efforts have not yet produced that reality. Environmental controls *are* a cost of manufacturing and industry. The justifications for this cost should not obscure the economic realities. Some people may choose to pay the costs for a cleaner environment but let no one tell us that pollution control is free.

The authors do little more to win our credence when they turn from assessing the hazards of oil spills to debating the prospects of nuclear holocaust. They naively accept the "nuclear winter" hypothesis of Carl Sagan, Paul Ehrlich, *et al.*, oblivious to recent scientific experiments at Los Alamos which have cast doubts upon this icy scenario. In this matter, as in so many others covered in this book, a discernible political agenda takes priority over dispassionate analysis. For all their professions of objectivity, the authors are advocates armed with indignation.

Perhaps the contributors' ideological commitment is most transparent on the population issue. The authors contend that 4.8 billion people "are overtaxing the capacities of some of the world's biological systems to support them, and are in fact reducing the earth's productive resource base at the very time when still more resources will be required to take care of the growing population." How then does one explain the continual reduction in the price of minerals per man-hour of labor? How does one explain similar trends for *all* major food commodities? How does one explain the rise of middle-class nations on the Asian rim at the same time these populations have increased enormously in the post-World War II era? The authors make the common error of misinterpreting the way in which wealth is created. Inert minerals in the ground create no wealth. Raw materials constitute but a precondition for wealth production. Wealth is generated by capital, labor, the application of technology, and—most important of all—by human ingenuity. Sand has no intrinsic value, but it can be converted into silicon crystals, then into glass fibers, and finally applied within a fiber-optics communication system.

If we are running out of resources, as the authors maintain, the market system will generate financial incentives for alternatives. The present oil glut is due in no small part to conservation steps taken during the 1970's when the price of oil escalated dramatically. As Justice Hand once argued, "Every accident is in search of a rescue." Necessity is indeed the mother of invention. The problem is that some people, particularly those who believe they have a monopoly on solutions, ignore the miracles wrought by market pressure and urge the adoption of new government regulations and programs. As strategies in the Energy Department in the 1970's indicated, markets are smarter than Washington bureaucrats.

It would be easier to excuse the environmentalists for their ignorance of history if they better understood the present. But their defective analysis is too fragile to survive collision with any number of facts: that the amount of potable water has increased by one third since 1960; that damage to the earth's ozone layer caused by fluorocarbons is reversed by the nitrogen oxide emissions from jet planes; that we produce more food than ever before at lower prices and with fewer farmers and with one-third of all farmland in this country intentionally kept idle; that there is more than enough food to feed the world's starving people if we could only resolve distribution and political problems. It comes as no surprise that the bibliography excludes the works of Julian Simon, Edith Efron, Herman Kahn, Vassily Leontief, and others who might mention such unpleasantly encouraging facts. Only in the environmentalist movement—where ignorance masquerades as "concerned sensibility" and counterarguments are treated like toxic waste—could a book like this get written or purchased.

Herbert London is dean of the Gallatin Division of New York University.

BOOKS IN BRIEF—SEX

A Feminist Dictionary by Cheris Kramarae and Paula A. Treichler, Boston and London: Pandora Press; $28.95. A useful and unintentionally hilarious compendium of self-important nonsense, e.g., "man-hating: a refusal to suppress the evidence of one's experience with men."

Most Dangerous Women: Feminist Peace Campaigners of the Great War by Anne Wiltsher, Boston and London: Pandora Press. The women of Grenham were not the first to want to roll over and play dead. Wiltsher does a good job of describing the zany antics of World War I peaceniks.

Women-in-Law: Explorations in Law, Family, and Sexuality, edited by Julia Brophy and Carol Smart, London and Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul. A collection of sometimes useful, sometimes silly, essays illustrating the history of family law in the UK, including predictable whines about patriarchal families and the injustice suffered by lesbian mothers.

Reproductive Rituals by Angus McLaren, London and New York: Metheun. McLaren sets out to overturn the old conception that preindustrial man (and woman) exercised no control over fertility. Although flawed by trendy ethics—abortion laws indicate a decline in women's rights—this careful study helps to reinforce what we *should* already know, that our ancestors were "neither automata nor simply ignorant, abject victims of biological forces."

The Destroying Angel by John Money, Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books. John Money is one of the pioneers in the study of sexual identity, but in recent years his work has increasingly abandoned any claims of scientific objectivity. In a peculiar pursuit of sexual freedom, Money now reveals that Kellogg's Cornflakes are part of the antimasturbation conspiracy. Before he loses what's left of his sanity, Money ought to consider another line of work.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

SCREEN

Material Wealth and Spiritual Poverty

by Sam Karnick

***Down and Out in Beverly Hills*; Directed by Paul Mazursky; Screenplay by Paul Mazursky and Leon Capetanos; Touchstone Films.**

Down and Out in Beverly Hills has a lot going for it. The film was directed and co-written by Paul Mazursky (*Moscow on the Hudson*). It has Richard Dreyfuss, Nick Nolte, and Bette Midler in the lead roles, as well as Tracy Nelson and "Little Richard" Penniman in supporting roles. The film was photographed in cheerful colors by Don McAlpine, and the sets, while deliberately tasteless, are still pleasant. Then why is this film so empty and depressing?

The story is based on Jean Renoir's 1932 film *Boudu Sauvé des Eaux*, which was taken from René Fauchois' play of the same name. This newest variation on the theme deals with the tribulations of a wealthy Beverly Hills clothes-hanger magnate (Richard Dreyfuss) who saves a bum named Jerry (Nick Nolte) from drowning and gives him a place to stay—for which the latter is oddly ungrateful. Most of the 1932 film's humor derives from the contrast between Jerry's grubbiness and the slick, spiritually poor Beverly Hills surroundings in which we find him. Mazursky, however, gets Jerry cleaned up a half-hour into the film, and thereafter the bum looks like everyone else.

Renoir made much more of the contrast by prolonging Boudu's transformation. Even when Boudu consents to wear bourgeois finery, he doesn't fit in: his posture, gestures, and manners clearly mark him as an outsider. Mazursky's Jerry, by contrast, looks good enough to be mistaken for a Hollywood writer as he sits in a Beverly Hills cafe with his new mentor. Admittedly, this departure from the structure of Renoir's film sets up a promising case of class confusion and mistaken identity: What would happen if Jerry really tried to make it as a writer? But Mazursky fails to follow it up and drops the situation.

The real contrast is between Jerry's gruff ingratitude and his savior's kind attempts to help him. This is fertile ground for humor, and it worked well in Renoir's original. Mazursky, however, wants to have it both ways: he wants to show Jerry's good side as well. We see Jerry talking to a lonely Iranian boy, teaching Mrs. Whiteman how to relax, curing both the dog's and the daughter's anorexia, and helping the son to accept his transvestism and incipient homosexuality.

Renoir, by contrast, lets Boudu be Boudu. Michel Simon's title character remains genuinely ignorant of what is expected of him in his strange new surroundings and takes a puckish delight in seeing how far he can go in breaking the rules. Boudu is an outsider, but he can't help being the way he is. Nolte's Jerry, on the other hand, knows the rules but refuses to follow them. He is, we are to believe, not just different from this bourgeois family, but better. The message—that "money isn't everything"—is obvious only to those who have plenty of the stuff.

The main difference between *Down and Out in Beverly Hills* and Renoir's original lies in the directors: *Boudu* was made by a genial satirist and one of the best artists the cinema has probably ever known, while the author of the remake is merely clever and derivative. Mazursky has made a career of plundering ideas from more original directors. As writer-director, he ended his first film, *Bob and Carol and Ted and Alice* (1969), with an absurdly botched and out-of-place steal from Fellini's 8½: what seems to be the entire population of Las Vegas streams out of Caesar's Palace behind the title characters, while a group of sopranos sings "What the World Needs Now Is Love, Sweet Love" on the sound track. The scene was so clumsy and artificial that even favorable critics choked on it.

Mazursky's career provides numerous examples of this tendency. From the further riflings of Fellini in *Alex in Wonderland* (1970)—in which Fellini himself makes a guest appearance—and *Next Stop, Greenwich Village*, through his "hip" updating of 30's remarriage comedies in *Blume in Love* (1973), to the present, Mazursky has continually taken from other films without managing to bring any fresh insights to the material. By contrast, when Woody Allen steals from Fellini's 8½ in *Stardust Memories* or Bergman's *Smiles of a Summer Night* in *A Midsummer Night's Sex Comedy*, he brings in enough of his own ideas to rejuvenate the material and make it his. While Allen uses other people's films for inspiration, Mazursky uses them as a crutch. So in the present case, instead of rethinking Renoir's film, he merely combines it with Gregory La Cava's *My Man Godfrey*, a 1936 screwball comedy in which a "forgotten man" (William Powell) moves in with a decadent rich family and helps them solve their problems while they help him solve his. Since the two original films had completely different attitudes toward wealth and middle-class values, it is small wonder if *Down and Out* ends up a confused affair indeed.

Mazursky's films almost always pound out the same lifeless message: "Throw off your chains of bourgeois morality, America. You have nothing to lose but your inhibitions." This simplemindedness forces him to manipulate his characters all too obviously. In *Down and Out*, Tracy Nelson, as the anorexic college-age daughter,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

goes to bed with Jerry. Her behavior is wildly out of character, and Mazursky makes no effort to explain it. It is apparently enough for the director if he can turn the screws a little tighter on his film's protagonist. The episodic story lines of his films are not forced upon him by the travels or picaresque adventures of his characters, but by a lack of insight into human character that compels him to invent new situations. Mazursky's films become a series of forced and ponderous paeans to freedom and spontaneity, in which the actors, but never the characters, improvise.

Freedom and spontaneity are barren virtues in the absence of other values. Mazursky's husbands *always* cheat on their wives; his wives *always* retaliate by cheating on their husbands and undertaking expensive psychoanalysis; his children smoke marijuana, wear punk fashions, and rebel against their parents (which is understandable); while their friends stand around like a postmodern chorus commiserating about how tough it all is.

Perhaps what Mazursky needs most of all is to leave Los Angeles for a while and spend some time out here in the real world. When he takes his characters from the working classes, as in *Harry and Tonto* and last year's *Moscow on the Hudson*, the results are far superior. In *Moscow on the Hudson*, for example, the sleaziness of the New York slum in which Robin Williams' Russian defector lives is balanced by Williams' unshakable optimism and his certainty that he will find a better life if only he works hard enough. There is, however, no such balancing element in *Down and Out in Beverly Hills*.

Mazursky's problem is shared by many other comic filmmakers and novelists of this century. They have a vision of what's bad—it's easy to see; it's all around us—but they have no vision of what is *good*. Directors like Mazursky, Blake Edwards (*Victor/Victoria*, S.O.B., and "*10*"), and John Hughes (*The Breakfast Club*) can see what's wrong, but all they can offer in response is the same treacly secular humanism that left a middle-class family open to the blandishments of Beverly Hills and the tricks of unscrupulous bums like Jerry. At best, all Mazursky has to offer is a misplaced sense of charity: when someone has little, give him something; if he wants more, give him more. If that is all there is, the rest of the country will soon resemble Beverly Hills.

Sam Karnick is a screenwriter who lives in Madison, Wisconsin.

REVISIONS

Woman's Place

In the 19th century, giants still roamed the earth. Even the sociologists were philosophers in those days—Comte, Weber, Toennies, Durkheim, to name only a few names celebrated in Nisbet's *The Sociological Tradition*—displayed a breadth and richness that is not much in evidence in this iron age of social thought. None of them, however, was as richly allusive and as possessed of brilliant insights as Georg Simmel. Not too long ago, Yale was kind enough to collect a volume of Simmel's writings on women (*Georg Simmel: On Women, Sexuality, and Love*, Yale University Press, New Haven), with a lucid and very helpful introduction by the translator, Guy Oakes.

In his essay "Female Culture" Simmel probed the delicate question of "the fundamental relations of the female nature" to what he calls "objective culture," i.e., the cultural processes and systems that have become *objective* by escaping from the subjective intent of the creatures. Our objective culture, it goes without saying, "is thoroughly male." Simmel contends that women are uniquely blessed with a more integral nature. While the objective culture of Europe and America depends on division of labor, women's domestic work is both "more diversified and less specialized." Simmel relates this phenomenon to women's nature, which he characterizes in one word: fidelity. While males tend to dissolve themselves into a plurality of roles, women find it more difficult to divide their loyalties. Simmel goes on to suggest that woman's nature may be better suited to some professions than to others, but woman's greatest cultural achievement remains the home. However, the erosion of family functions in modern times has reduced woman's realm—once a vast empire—down to little more than a capital city and a few suburbs, something like Byzantium in the 15th century. In our own time, even the capital things, the birth and rearing of children, are threatened by a set of Turks far more savage than the armies of Mehemet II.

MUSIC

Train of Fools

by Janet Scott Barlow

***The First Rock & Roll Confidential Report* by Dave Marsh, New York: Pantheon Books; $12.95.**

In the 30 years since it first gained broad popularity, rock 'n' roll has put on some show; it has been by turns entertaining, grotesque, energetic, absurd—and always "successful." There were even times when it had a good beat and you could dance to it.

But since the 60's, the decade of pervasive Relevance, an even better show has taken place off-stage, around the kids-turned-writers-turned-critics who early hitched a ride on the big Rock Train, struggling ever since to appear in control while hanging on for dear life. Within this group, no one has struggled harder than Dave Marsh, "America's Best-Known Rock Writer," as he is described on his own book covers. Marsh stands alone in this crowd of freeloaders for one reason: he has decided he owns the railroad.

Dave Marsh is a critic with an agenda propped up by a cause. The agenda calls for a political union of "rock star, steelworker, [music] industry professional, welfare mother, and just plain fan," all responding to rock 'n' roll "as a potent vehicle through which what's right and wrong about

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

America and the world is expressed, discussed, and analyzed." His cause is the "intrinsic value" of rock 'n' roll, its "fruitful cultural tradition," and its political potential for dragging "the unwanted and faceless, the pissed-off and brokenhearted into the spotlight."

Marsh's primary theme is that "this is the day of the Big Lie, not just about the meaning of the music but about . . . the heart of America itself." For those in doubt about the pervasiveness of the Lie, Marsh supplies plenty of evidence: he accuses Ray Charles of "criminal behavior" for singing "with the bloodthirsty and jingoist Reagan regime" at the Republican National Convention; he declares that the riot after Diana Ross's Central Park concert was "inevitable" in a city "where only 10 percent of the minority youth have full-time jobs"; he complains that because the U.S. Postal Service has not issued a commemorative Elvis Presley stamp, "there is absolutely *no* sign that Presley . . . will *ever* be honored in his native land."

Marsh explains that one of the "driving forces" behind American pop music is "the need for those who suffer most in our segregated, unequal country to express their particular reality on their own terms." Within these terms, Madonna's fame is "historic necessity" and Prince's "art" with a beat culminates "an American tradition that goes back to Walt Whitman," a tradition that "deserves an honored place in the classroom, both for its intrinsic value and as an educational tool." Some parents may object to the messages in rock 'n' roll, but "shielding our children from images of sex and violence will only warp their outlook and make them ill-equipped to deal with the real world."

Pronouncements can be found on almost every page of *The First Rock & Roll Confidential Report*, a book by Marsh and his associates, who publish *Rock & Roll Confidential* ("The Voice of the Undesirable Element"), a monthly newsletter for the seriously serious. In "Paperback Writer," a dated article from this book, one Sandra Choron writes that the B. Dalton chain, in a move to eliminate overstock, is removing many of the rock books "glutting the paperback shelves." Thus, book chains "are determining what will be read." As a result of this "devastating" decision, buyers can no longer "count on finding" *Nowhere to Run* or *The Big Beat* or *Unsung Heroes of Rock 'n' Roll* (an affectionate book that Choron labels "scabrous," probably because author Nick Tosches indecently claims that rock 'n' roll "flourished because it sold" and that its heroes "all had one thing in common: they liked Cadillacs"). The consequence is that profit-hungry booksellers "curb the literary marketplace in a manner that is nothing short of artistic suppression, a clear violation of the spirit, if not the letter, of the First Amendment."

What is interesting here is the I Can't Make Sense So I'll Make Noise method of argument, which is distinguished by the substitution of indignation for logic and volume for clarity. To make it work, start with a conclusion—one that does justice to your natural sense of outrage (book chains engage in artistic suppression). Then close your eyes and lurch backward until you bump into an assumption that feels like proof (certain books cannot be found). Now stumble onto a shocker that surprises no one but you (businesses are interested in profit). Finally, flop down on the First Amendment, open your eyes, and feel *proud* of yourself.

In addition to half-baked ideology and collective intellectual expediency, *The First Rock & Roll Confidential Report* offers up Dave Marsh the writer. In his introductory essay, Marsh places rock 'n' roll in its proper cultural context: "In an urban, industrial society, people can only make (and transmit) culture by using the technology provided by that society. A Big Mac is a hamburger; it's not a 'real hamburger'—that's a conundrum evident to everyone who has ever enjoyed the taste of both. Such distinctions are ultimately useful mostly (if not only) to those who despise hamburgers in general, probably because burgers are vulgar." He winds this up with a warning to "pay attention to the fact that, in the good stuff (music as well as burgers), there's a kernel—or a nugget—of something bigger."

If that's not enough to turn you off rock journalism *and* hamburgers for life, Mr. Analogy deepens this conundrum with another kernel (nugget?): "Within the bloodstream of the market, rock and its associated subcultures function like a herpes virus, sometimes dormant but periodically erupting with embarrassing, disfiguring, and, worst of all, unpredictable consequences (aggravated by stress). Like herpes, rock isn't immobilizing to the system it inhabits—but it *can* be contagious." Is there a doctor in the house? An editor?

"Rock saved my life," Dave Marsh has written. And here is the beginning of his confusion. Leaving aside the fact that melodrama suits the self-absorbed, one could conclude from his declaration either that rock 'n' roll possesses inherent life-saving properties, or that Dave Marsh has the kind of personality that could be hauled back from the brink by The Who.

But by making himself his own best and constant proof, Dave Marsh has become an ideological nag, which in turn has made him a fraud as a critic, a broken record of gripes. He bought into the wheezing rock myth that the music "came into the world fighting for its life," and from that myth developed the proposition that rock 'n' roll is a social catalyst, a political umbrella, and meaningful comfort to the oppressed. It didn't, and it isn't.

Rock 'n' roll sprang up in the 50's like a big goofy weed in the pop music garden, and far from fighting for its life

M·O·V·I·N·G·?

LET US KNOW BEFORE YOU GO!

To assure uninterrupted delivery of *Chronicles*, please notify us in advance. Send change of address on this form with the mailing label from your latest issue of *Chronicles* to: Subscription Department, *Chronicles*, P.O. Box 800, Mount Morris, Illinois 61054.

Name_____

Address_____

City_____

State_____ Zip_____

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

it quickly took over the plot (leaving others to fight for *their* survival—anybody remember Eddie Fisher?). Rock suggested to its large and ready natural audience—adolescents (not to be confused with mythical Teenagers)—an outline of their own special disposition: it was spontaneous, fun-seeking, deliberately but not dangerously provocative, and naive—a good-natured bluff, an inside joke shared by millions. Because the music did not concern itself with issues of taste, good *or* bad, it avoided both pretentiousness and vulgarity.

The result of this insouciance was a coarse sensibility matched with a stylistic integrity, a combination that not only characterized early rock 'n' roll but was its reason for being. Rock sent back the message it received: Style could be valid without having to be relevant. (It could also be invalid without being relevant, but that would come later.) The music did not create a moment, it ran into one. And the "preachers and politicians" never laid a hand on it.

If rock 'n' roll's initial success was inevitable, so was its eventual mutation. The one assault to which the music was not impervious found it soon enough. The assault was intellect, brought on the scene by critics for the self-promoting purpose of Explaining Things. Would-be rock critics took one look at the galloping weed (a nice enough weed, but a *weed*) and decided that by calling the thing an orchid they certified themselves as botanists.

That decision brought with it the pomposity and affectation that hang to this day over the big Rock Train like a bad smell. One whiff brings the discovery that USA for Africa is not a rock charity project but is "part of a profoundly political process, whether or not its participants are aware of it." (It's amazing how often Marsh knows more about people than they know about themselves.) If you think Bruce Springsteen is a popular American rock star whose music is open to the personal interpretation (or noninterpretation) of the fans who foot the bill, you'd best sniff again. This is Marsh's Springsteen, busy spitting "into the eye of a bleak land that destroys other countries in preposterous wars and devastates its own citizens by refusing them even the simple dignity of a job."

Move further downwind and catch a waft of Prince, doing his part for tradition by "hump[ing] the speakers." Or this: "Most American listeners concluded that 'Sweet Dreams (Are Made of This)' was just another pop record." Breathe deeper, if you dare: "Without a grounding in socialism or any other kind of systematic thinking about political life and events (a grounding American education rarely offers), the oblique references and criticisms made in songs like 'Sweet Dreams (Are Made of This)' fall on ears of stone." Think of it: rock fans are being told they need a *grounding*—in systematic political thinking, no less—before they can approach the Top 40. This from a man who wouldn't know systematic thinking in any variety if it leaped fully formed from his Big Mac. No wonder these people are "pissed-off and brokenhearted."

If this situation were worthy of irony—which it is not—the irony would be that by willfully misinterpreting the thing he sought to defend, Marsh has hopelessly fouled up what he professed to love. Along the way, he has demanded affirmation of rock's value from the very people he mocks as unfit to speak its name.

To that demand, perhaps the appropriate response may be found in the words of Jimmie Rodgers, representative of America's fruitful musical tradition: *"Get off, get off, you railroad bum."*

Janet Scott Barlow has written for Music & Sound Output, Parents *magazine, and* Commonweal.

CORRESPONDENCE

Letter From the Lower Right

by John Shelton Reed

Death of a Communist

Look elsewhere for amusement this month. This is not a lighthearted letter. It is a reflection on the life of a man who was once a friend of mine, a man whose life and work demonstrate that meaning well is not enough.

Al and I were graduate students at Columbia in the 60's. For a short time we worked together in an informal study group preparing for comprehensive examinations. But our politics (construing that word broadly) made us poor harness-mates. Al was ferociously bright, very well-read, and extraordinarily hardworking, but we just had too little in common even to study together.

If Communists still carry cards, surely Al carried one. He was, by his own description, an orthodox Marxist-Leninist. I would say that his politics were more important to him than his academic work, except that he saw no distinction between the two: his "socialist" politics were his life. He was always dashing off to civil rights demonstrations in Mississippi, or to support striking miners in Harlan County. In ordinary, nonpolitical discourse, he was a good-natured, sensitive soul, but such discourse with Al was rare. He took politics very seriously indeed, and when the subject came up (far too often for my taste) he displayed a blinkered sort of humorlessness. For

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

him, revolution was no laughing matter. When a friend of ours spent a research year in Romania and came back a fervent anti-Communist, Al told him, "You're a good man, Dan. Too bad we'll have to shoot you." Dan swears to this day that Al meant it.

My usual defense against left-wingers is to tease them, but that didn't work with Al. He either didn't know he was being teased, or he responded with flat scorn. Either way, it wasn't any fun. On one occasion, though, I couldn't resist. Al and some of his comrades had started a magazine called *Ripsaw*, reviving the title of a long-defunct journal of hairy-chested radicalism. When their posters went up on bulletin boards around Columbia, I pointed out to Al that a *real* proletarian would know that the saw teeth on the magazine's logo were those of a crosscut saw, not a ripsaw. He looked at me suspiciously and stalked off, but I bet he looked it up, because the next day all of the posters were gone.

In an atmosphere vibrant with the enthusiasm of the New Left, Al was a constant, stern reminder of the old. During Columbia's troubles in 1968, he was in the thick of things, rushing from one meeting to another, drafting statements, addressing caucuses, posting placards. He had deep misgivings about what he saw as the amateur revolutionaries around us, and phrases like "infantile leftism" came easily to him. But when push came to shove, he and I wound up on opposite sides of the picket lines. I never had an easy conversation with him after that, probably as much my fault as his, but I regret it.

We went our separate ways, geographically as well as politically. Al took a college-teaching position in the Northwest, where he belonged to the "editorial collective" of a journal called *The Insurgent Sociologist*. From time to time I saw him at conventions, peddling the journal. We barely spoke on these occasions, if we spoke at all; the last time, I wouldn't swear he recognized me.

Occasionally I ran across one of Al's dreary, unreadable, party-line books —attacking Solidarity, praising the USSR's human rights record, that sort of thing. I gathered from mutual friends that he had achieved a modest fame: the man to call when you wanted a specimen Stalinist to spice up your program. Someone told me that he vacationed at Soviet resorts in the Crimea: my informant may have been putting me on, but it would have been perfectly in character.

I heard, too, that Al had campaigned unsuccessfully for the chairmanship of his department. Academic etiquette says you're not supposed to campaign for such a job (you should at least pretend that you have more important things to do), but Al never gave a damn for etiquette, academic or otherwise. He reportedly campaigned as "Big Al, the People's Pal," and I smiled at what I saw as evidence that middle age was mellowing him, giving him finally a sense of humor and perspective.

Then, last year, at the age of 43, he took a gun and blew his brains out. According to *The Insurgent Sociologist*, his final words on a last note were, "The working class will prevail. Carry on."

Al defended and worked for—well, damn it, for an evil empire. Yet he was an intelligent man, and a decent one, selfless and sincere in his devotion to what he believed was human welfare. Last month I wrote about Bob Jones University: to compare Al to the people there would have annoyed him, and them, too, but while Al's answer appeals to me far less even than Bob Jones's—indeed, Al's answer is part of our problem in a way that Bob Jones's is not—there is no denying that true believers of both sorts share some of the same admirable qualities.

It bears repeating that all of the hellish ideologies of our time appeal to good impulses as well as bad ones. It is comforting to think that evildoers are always evil people, but we deceive and to that extent disarm ourselves by believing that. Karl Marx himself insisted on the distinction between motives and objective consequences; he was right to make that distinction, and we can start by applying it to Marxists. Our collectivist adversaries' actions may have ghastly, Satanic consequences—may lead inexorably to the Gulag—but some of them are driven by something very like Christian charity. If we judge on motivation alone, Al *was* the people's pal.

And he used to be mine. When we were students together, he saw life as incessant struggle, and he relished both the life and the struggle. But he had become depressed, I'm told, and tired—so much so that he sought oblivion in death. I hope he has found rest. And mercy, too. In the next world that Marxists don't believe in, good intentions may count for something.

John Shelton Reed, 44, teaches sociology at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill.

Letter From the Heartland

by Jane Greer

Snow Job

Around here, folks are awfully worried.

It's strange, though—we're not worried about what the nightly news *says* we're worried about.

Contrary to (seemingly) popular opinion, we don't spend every waking moment in a nuclear catatonia. Our children—at least the children I know—don't have nightmares of "the fire next time." They don't even think about nuclear war (or about what they dream, for that matter) until we ask them to.

People living their happy, laborious lives here in the heartland wonder whom the nightly news reporters have *talked* to (is it always the same strange, frothing fringe group, kept on retainer, or do they take turns?) and whether, perhaps, we *might* be just a little out of touch. Truth to tell, though, we don't worry about that too often; we're "touched" by our local, state, and Federal governments, and by distant, relentless do-good groups, more than we'd like to be.

Even though no Eastern-seaboard J-school grads ever come here to reap the harvest of our opinion, there are easy ways of knowing what we worry about, and one of the easiest is the letters we write to the editors of our local papers. After all, no one *makes* us write those letters. We do it out of love (or wrath, a mutant love), for free, regardless of the consequences; we do it because we are *moved*. Granted, our

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

letters come from close to the surface of our hearts and intellects—but who on earth is qualified to say what might lie deeper?

An informal survey of 11 newspapers in eight Midwestern states—editors in Illinois, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota answered my query—turns up results which should surprise no one who listens to friends or reads his local paper thoroughly. Of the 11 editorial-page editors responding, seven listed *local issues* as taking up most of the space in their letters columns during 1985. The biggest single topic in Aurora, Illinois, triggering a four-month flood of letters, was a "proposal by 1,000 Hindu doctors and lawyers to build the nation's third Hindu temple to serve the needs of 30,000 Chicago-area Hindus." Grand Island, Nebraska, had a brouhaha over property taxes. Other Midwestern citizens were in an uproar mainly over local nuclear waste disposal (Sioux Falls, South Dakota); a referendum to build a hotel on the civic center parking lot (Rapid City, South Dakota); perceived local school district blunders (Billings, Montana); the pros and cons of city-manager government (St. Joseph, Missouri); and a local school bond issue (Bismarck, North Dakota).

Of the remaining four editors, he from Peoria, Illinois, cited free trade versus protectionism as engendering the most letters to the editor in 1985; Wichita, Kansas, said most people wrote about fundamentalism and related issues ("abortion, creationism, family values, etc."); and people in St. Paul, Minnesota, and Fargo, North Dakota, were most concerned about abortion. (The Fargo editor made a point of telling me that most of the letters were antiabortion. Those darned North Dakotans *insist* on thinking unconstitutionally!)

Abortion was a secondary issue—turned up on the editors' lists but not in #1 ranking—in four cities; financial and psychological troubles of modern farmers showed up seven times; and local and national taxation and the Federal deficit were important concerns in five cities.

National defense/"Star Wars"/arms control—it was called all three—was an issue of concern in only three cities, ranking #4 in St. Paul and #5 in Peoria and Fargo. No *wonder* they never come here to talk with us.

Other secondary topics listed were inhumanity to animals ("somebody shot a dog with an arrow"—Americans must surely rank up there with the Brits in their hot defense of mistreated animals), an ACLU challenge to a lit cross atop a fire department building, white versus Hispanic communities, medical malpractice, and the seat-belt law (all of the above from Aurora, whose editor presented the most detailed list), along with Central and South America, terrorism, the Reagan Administration, local unemployment, Roman Catholicism versus Fundamentalism, snow removal, and cable TV service.

How shallow, some might say. How utterly inane. How . . . *dull*. Huge-bellied babies are dying in Ethiopia, and the born-agains are taking over the world, and none of this matters because we'll all be glow-in-the-dark dust in a few years if we don't start talking, really *talking*, to each other—and those hicks in Grand Island are worried about *property taxes*? God help us all.

Well, God does. He causes us all to be born with natural and functional instincts, one of which is to care most about what is most immediate in time and space. Yes, it's an animal sort of

REVISIONS

Sexual Desire

In *Sexual Desire: A Moral Philosophy of the Erotic* (New York: Basic Books; $25.00) Roger Scruton has provided us with a subtle and original discussion of the sexual gamut, from the oldest profession to the last word in sadomasochism. Scruton's argument turns on what he calls the "rule of authority," the privilege we accord ourselves (and others) in using the first person perspective. As men and women, we *know*—as we know nothing else—when we feel pleasure or pain, and if someone else honestly says he is in pain, we accept the statement. From this, Scruton argues that sexual desire is always towards some other man or woman whose "first person" perspective we acknowledge.

Even in the absence of a divine Creator, we can make moral judgments against perversions like paedophilia, sadomasochism, and—more tentatively, he argues—homosexuality, because the perverts do not fully honor the otherness of other people: "Like the bestial man and the necrophiliac, the paedophile cannot surrender himself to the full challenge of another perspective, but must confine his attentions to that which he can also control."

Much of the book makes use of the phenomenological approach—responding to the "surface" is Scruton's expression. In the attempt to explore the surface he makes a sensitive use of literary materials. (His comparison of Sappho and Proust, while it is impossible in one sense, brilliantly lights up the differences between lesbians and male homosexuals.) It is when he descends to the depths of human nature that he begins to get into trouble. Relying on a handful of books, he proceeds to take on entire fields of research on which he passes judgment with as little fairness as accuracy. Pierre Vanden Berghe, a brilliant sociologist writing from a biological perspective, is mocked for work that Scruton has only seen secondhand—a rhetorical style which the philosopher might better have left to the left-wing critics who are mercilessly attacking his book back in Britain.

Still, *Sexual Desire* is a major contribution to the study of morals. Most of the technical arguments are confined to a single chapter (plus an appendix). The result is a book that is always forceful and often memorable. His central argument on the dignity of persons is as original as it is obvious, now that he has said it. Scruton has given us a healthy antidote to Freud and Foucault that no one interested in the subject—and who isn't?—can afford to ignore.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

thing, but human intellect and heart take over as we grow to adulthood, where instinct runs dry in the lower animals. The result is *family*—which, if it is healthy, grows to gather in neighbor, city, state, nation, world, in hope if not always in joy. Thus we *do* write about issues long-removed from our immediate concern.

But first things first. A rampant school board or laggardly snow removal touches us where it hurts the most—right in the quotidian—and abortion, cited seven out of 11 times, touches us in the intimacies of our bodies and moral beliefs. If we aren't worried about what lies nearest us, how can we hope to bring peace and justice to the world?

Jane Greer edits Plains Poetry Journal, *which prints no letters to the editor.*

TYPEFACES

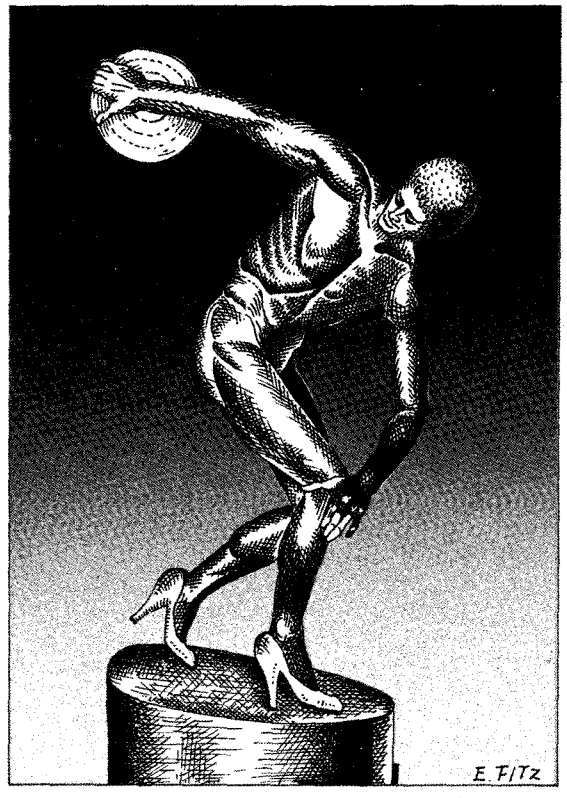
The Man of Mode

"Man at his best" is both the slogan and promise of *Esquire* magazine. "Best," in this context, turns out to mean all that money can buy in the way of automobiles, wristwatches, adoring women, and clothes. Fernando Lamas' paradoxical aphorism (taken seriously by a dull-witted comic who parlayed it into a career) sums it up: it doesn't matter how you feel, so long as you look good. For *Esquire*, what's important about Jack Kemp is that he has "grown more attractive with age." In the same issue, readers could retreat from the complexities of modern life by looking into a short story by Bob Shacochis, a writer whose tales are filled with "the melancholy of self-exile, the sea air, and the smell of rum," or by turning the remarkable number of pages devoted to showing and telling us why smart men in Washington and New York (including the U.S. senators, top government officials, and national broadcasters who posed as models for the pictures) are now wearing sweaters as "the new weekend alternative."

Esquire was born with a fascination with men's fashion in its genes: all of its ancestors—including *The Man of Today*, *Gentlemen's Quarterly* (old version), *Apparel Arts*, *Club & Campus*, and *The Observer*—were essentially haberdashery journals. *Esquire's* founding editor, Arnold Gingrich (who began his career as an advertising manager), looks back at the periodical's genealogy in *Nothing But People: The Early Days at 'Esquire'* (Crown, 1971). Gingrich credits *Gentlemen's Quarterly* with breaking through journalists' indifference to male fashion: "Almost the only editorial treatment ever accorded to fashions for men in the pages of American magazines and newspapers had been derisory" (one more reason to long for the good old days).

With remarkable candor, Gingrich admits that planning for *Esquire* focused chiefly on ways "to add more and more sugarcoating to the bitter pill that . . . the fashion content represented." The magazine had to be made "hair-chested" and "substantial enough to deodorize the lavender whiff coming from the fashion pages." The editors planned from the beginning to seek out gifted writers and talented athletes not so much because they were interested in fiction or football, but because they knew of no other way to make a men's fashion show in print acceptable to "the cream of the great middle class between the nobility and the peasantry." Ernest Hemingway and Gene Tunney were just part of the "sugarcoating."

In only a few years after its first issue (1933), *Esquire* was in the limelight. The editors explained their strategy and its success with a jaunty nonchalance in a promotional book, *The Third New Year: An Etude in the Key of Frankness*, sent to advertisers in 1935:



> Esquire treats as legitimate subject matter all the normal activities of civilized adult life. Its only aim . . . is amusement. . . . It's flippant, cynical, frequently superficial, and sometimes somewhat brash in its sophistication. Perhaps that's why some of you have told us that you "don't want it in your home." . . . The best days of a magazine last only as long as the period for which it

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

happens to hold the spotlight. It's a lot like a musical comedy routine. All the pretty girls are lined up across the stage. One steps out and does her specialty and, for a moment, attention is focused on her, along with the spotlight. Then she steps back into line.

The dancing girl metaphor did not fit the *Esquire* of the 30's nearly so well as it did the *Esquire* of the 40's, when the magazine became decidedly less literary and far more titillating. Gingrich explains the decision to include more and larger "pinups" as an effort to "curry favor with the War Production Board," which gave more paper to those magazines that could show they were trying "to enhance the morale of the troops." The same winds of war that blew in the partially unclad young women also blew out most of the nattily dressed male models, as wartime austerity enforced a Spartan simplicity on the world of male fashion.

Gingrich left in 1946 to become *Esquire's* European correspondent, and, with the other key founders—including Bill Weintraub and Meyer Levin—otherwise engaged, there remained no "strong voice to insist on a restoring and reinvigorating of the magazine's original fashion policy." They also gave up any "pretense at maintenance of the original literary standards." Cheap Western and detective fiction replaced the work of Hemingway, Dreiser, and Fitzgerald.

But in 1952, the *Esquire* management brought Gingrich back to the helm and gave him a mandate to revitalize the magazine, whose circulation was beginning to show the effects of a decade of drift and confusion. Gingrich made it a top priority to get the girly pictures out of the magazine, and he credits Hugh Hefner with helping him accomplish that goal. Hefner worked for *Esquire* in the postwar years, but left in 1950 to begin his spectacularly successful *Playboy*—"the magazine that is what *Esquire* used to be." *Playboy's* success only made Gingrich even more "determined to work the opposite side of the street . . . [by] ridding *Esquire* of any last vestigial traces of the girly flavor."

With the girls gone, the *Esquire* of the 50's could turn to important things—like the Hawaiian shirts and Roman striped pants that were suddenly all the rage with fashion-conscious men. Cowboys and shamuses also gave way to brand-name pieces by Aldous Huxley, Tennessee Williams, Orson Welles, William Faulkner, Albert Camus, and Truman Capote. But besides returning the magazine to the pinnacles of fashion and fiction, the editorial policy during the 50's developed some provocative new twists. Gingrich explains that in trying to restore life to the magazine, he gave encouragement "to the ideas . . . no matter how harebrained or wild-eyed, of the young editors." Harold Hayes (recruited by Gingrich in 1956 as "a Southern liberal") explained in a preface to an *Esquire* anthology that the editors took it as their task to challenge "the banality of the Fifties." "From the raspberry to the hoax . . . and occasionally with some loss of dignity, the idea was to suggest alternate possibilities to a monolithic view. And how monolithic it was! The passivity of the Fifties was shared by garage mechanics and college presidents."

Things moved fast in the 60's, and it was hard to stay out in front. Within four years after publishing Lee Oswald's letters to his mother and Tom Wicker's reverential tribute to the fallen President, *Esquire* brought out Timothy Leary's paean to LSD and Jean Genet's graphic account of the 1968 Democratic Convention; stories on topless bars, on the "New Sentimentality" of sharpness and self-gratification, and on "The Life and Death of a Hippie" (one James "Groovy" Hutchinson, murdered with a wealthy girlfriend); and inevitably an issue devoted to "The Beautiful People: Campus Heroes for '68/69," with features on the hijinks of Herbert Marcuse, Noam Chomsky, and Howard Zinn.

Gingrich soon sensed a tremendous "generation gap" between him and his new readers. He didn't speak the same language as his new editors. He didn't care for the "bop talk" that filled the trendy new articles. The contrast between the gifted writers of the old days and the incomprehensible new "experimental fiction" unsettled him, and he was annoyed at the way "instant celebrity [was] turning young authors and

BOOKS IN BRIEF

Loving With a Vengeance: Mass-Produced Fantasies for Women by Tania Modleski, New York: Methuen; $6.95. What can be worse than a Harlequin romance? Try feminist literary criticism of Harlequin romances.

Politics and Tyranny: Lessons in Pursuit of Freedom by Milton Friedman, *et al.*, San Francisco: Pacific Institute; $7.95. Friedman and Company explain the evils of government spending and the ineffectiveness of the Reagan Administration in combating them.

The Responsibility of Hermeneutics by Roger Lundin, Anthony C. Thiselton, and Clarence Walhout, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans/Paternoster; $8.95. A serious attempt to apply the latest ideas on literary criticism to the reading of Scripture. Paul de Man, deconstruction, and reader-response theory are bad enough on Wordsworth. Imagine what they can do to the Sermon on the Mount or the story of Job.

Rewriting English: Cultural Politics of Gender and Class by Janet Batsleer, *et al.*, New York: Methuen; $11.95. A by-now-predictable argument that English studies should focus on women's issues, working-class literature, and all things wild and wonderful.

Too Many People? A Problem in Values by Christopher Derrick, San Francisco: Ignatius. A Christian rejoinder to Malthusian propaganda.

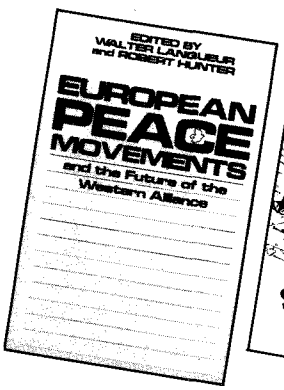
People in Space: Policy Perspectives for a "Star Wars" Century, edited by James E. Katz, New Brunswick: Transaction Books; $14.95. Looking at everything from particle-beam weaponry to UFO's, a dozen contributors assess humanity's future in the stars.

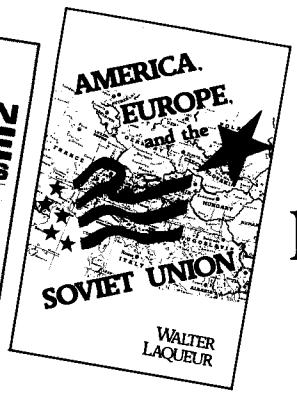
Brigham Young and the Expanding American Frontier by Newell G. Bringhurst, Boston: Little, Brown; $16.95. A capsule biography of one of the most controversial figures in the American West.

The Way of My Cross: Masses at Warsaw by Father Jerzy Popieluszko, Chicago: Regnery. A translation of the homilies, prayers, and Scripture readings of a priest whose resistance to communist oppression made him a national inspiration—and a martyr.

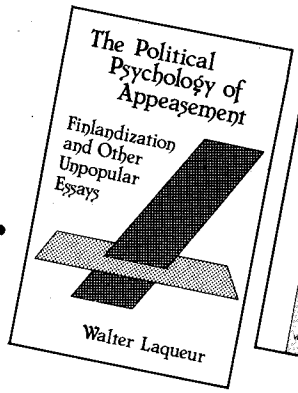
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

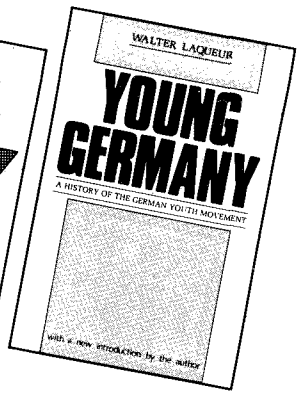
FROM TRANSACTION BOOKS





BOOKS BY Walter Laqueur





EUROPEAN PEACE MOVEMENTS AND THE FUTURE OF THE WESTERN ALLIANCE

Walter Laqueur and Robert Hunter, editors

This extraordinary compendium concerns the future of the Western alliance and the development of the peace movements in Europe and in the United States. The peace movement is an old phenomenon given new life by NATO decisions concerning nuclear deployment in Europe and the Soviet responses along the same lines. After a long postwar marriage, Europeans and Americans alike are reexamining the premises of the Western alliance.

The work contains an extraordinary array of talent from both the American and European perspectives. Among the major contributors and their themes are Henry Kissinger on "A Plan to Reshape NATO"; William G. Hyland on "The European Peace Movement and NATO"; Irving Kristol on "What's Wrong with NATO?"; Theodore Draper on "The Western Misalliance"; Niels Haagerup on "The Nordic Peace Movements"; Martin Ceadel on "The British Nuclear Disarmers"; and Jeffrey Herf on "The SPD and the Peace Movement in West Germany." This is a well-integrated text, with no random essays.

ISBN: 0-88738-035-2 (cloth) **$39.95**
1985 **385 pp.**

AMERICA, EUROPE, AND THE SOVIET UNION

Walter Laqueur

Bringing together for the first time his many penetrating essays on U.S. foreign policy, Europe, and the Soviet Union, written during the Carter and the Reagan administrations, Laqueur in this book focuses on the absence of a U.S. global strategy.

Laqueur shows that this lack of strategy, a hallmark of both Republican and Democratic administrations, has its counterpart in the general drift that characterizes Western European politics. For both the United States and Europe, there has been a weakening of political will.

Exposing the myth that the United States is in an enviable position in the world, Laqueur reveals how the media and the academic community have been unwilling to accept the fact of diminished U.S. stature in the Western world.

ISBN: 0-87855-362-2 (cloth) **$22.95**
1983 **200 pp.**

Walter Laqueur is editor-in-chief of *The Washington Quarterly*, one of the most influential foreign policy journals in the nation. He is chairman of the International Research Council of the Center for Strategic and International Studies at Georgetown University, and codirector of the Wiener Library and Institute of European History in London.

YOUNG GERMANY

A HISTORY OF THE GERMAN YOUTH MOVEMENT
New introduction by the author

Walter Laqueur

Young Germany explores the revolt of the younger generation in Germany from 1896 to 1933. It is a readable history of the Free Youth Movement, one of the most significant factors in shaping modern Germany. Laqueur, who grew up in Germany, retraces the history of the movement, its central ideas, and its cultural background.

ISBN: 0-88738-002-6 (cloth) **$24.95**
ISBN: 0-87855-960-4 (paper) **$12.95**
1984 **260 pp.**

THE POLITICAL PSYCHOLOGY OF APPEASEMENT

FINLANDIZATION AND OTHER UNPOPULAR ESSAYS

Walter Laqueur

This volume takes its title from one of the most controversial and prescient essays of our times: an analysis of Eurocommunism, not simply as a Western European heresy but as a consequence of military stalemate and the atrophy of will in the West.

Laqueur's papers cover the areas with which he has become strongly identified in recent years: American foreign policy, European affairs, political futures, terrorism, the Middle East conflict, and finally, Judaica.

ISBN: 0-87855-336-3 (cloth) **$19.95**
1980 **283 pp.**

Order from your bookstore or prepaid from:

Transaction Books
Rutgers—The State University
Department WL 7
New Brunswick, New Jersey 08903

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

artists into self-indulgent and temperamental stars before they've mastered their craft." Editors, Gingrich complained, were "kowtowing to punks" because they were "afraid to give them the spanking they deserve, because they can sense the presence of other editors just waiting . . . to grab the spoiled brats and woo them away with more and larger lollipops."

But fashion promoters can't afford to buck trends: Gingrich eventually handed the reins over to Harold Hayes, Don Erickson, Robert Benton, and the rest of "the kids." Gingrich spent his last years (he died in 1976) reminiscing on the old days and philosophizing about compromises he'd made with the new era: "He who would keep a shop must have a smiling face . . . and when you're getting out a magazine you are in effect just another kind of shopkeeper, and if you want to go on being right because you think your customers are wrong you will sooner or later do so at your peril." No haberdasher—not even Harry Truman—could have said it better.

Since the 60's, *Esquire* has defined, not defied, cultural orthodoxy in America. Mention in *Esquire's* "Washington Briefing" carries real weight. (What other magazine can get senators to pose as fashion models?) And inclusion in *Esquire's* annual *Register* edition is just one step short of canonization for political organizers, artists, writers, or clothing designers. *Esquire* has largely regained its position as "America's most talked-about magazine."

Little mystery surrounds *Esquire's* renewed prominence. For once the 60's had done their worst, the devotees of the New Sentimentality shared nothing except an obsession with stylish leisure, private consumption, and fashion—*Esquire's* specialties since the beginning. By the early 70's, articles on men's fashion, on French cuffs, double-breasted wool suits, or trench coats no longer needed camouflage or apology. Harold Hayes observed that *Esquire* had crossed its "traditional boundaries" during the 60's and entered onto "the more forbidding ground of politics, sociology, science, and even, occasionally, religion." But a more credible analysis would see the movement going the other direction: that is, politics, social mores, and even religion lost their deeper roots and simply became new modes of fashion, with no firmer philosophical or epistemological roots than designer shirts and jeans.

Readers of *Esquire* can still find what passes for our best fiction as well as articles on serious subjects by celebrity journalists. Yet it is hard not to suspect that *Esquire* editors and most readers regard all this "literature" as nothing more than the necessary accessories to go with a good suit—something like an ascot or a good cologne. Etheridge set the tone in *The Man of Mode*: "A gentleman should never go beyond a song or a billet." To get a real whiff of how *Esquire* views books, take a look at last summer's issue on new fiction. The cover shows a girl in a bikini on top of a stack of books. (Do girls still fall for guys who say they're writers? We hope so.)

The honeymoon between sex and writing does not last long. In an issue last fall, Jerry Adler, a senior writer with *Newsweek*, explains that he valued his first child as a "philosophic statement," but now that his wife wants a second, the whole thing was a bother. "I am worried," he confesses, "about what another child will cost both in terms of income and outgo." (*Newsweek* and *Esquire* are apparently content to pay him to write sentences like this.) No wonder that *Esquire's* book on physical fitness—one of many *Esquire* leisure titles, covering wine-tasting, gambling, golfing, and fashion—bears the revealing subtitle *How the Successful Male Can Avoid Going to Seed*. Athletic sterility is now *de rigueur*.

We are, after all, a nation of men who would rather be dandies than daddies. Some of us are less than delighted with the prospect of an entire generation of touts, pimps, and male models putting on the airs of Sir Fopling Flutter, but the editors of *Esquire* must be delighted. Their "pretty girl" has once again stepped out in front of the chorus line of national journalism into center stage. She commands the spotlight, and she knows her routine perfectly. But then, as William James could have told us, no one has danced burlesque longer or more artfully than "the bitch goddess success."

REVISIONS

Home Economics

Gary S. Becker's groundbreaking *A Treatise on the Family* has been reissued in paperback (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press). Full of bewildering charts, formulas, and the stock paraphernalia of voodoo economics (a tautological expression, if ever there was one), Becker's prose text has enough bold insights and startling conclusions to warrant the effort.

An economic analysis of family relations has several advantages. Problems can be posed simply, results are quantifiable. Such a method also manages to bypass or bracket the ethical questions which usually impede serious investigation. Becker argues, for example, that under some circumstances women might prefer polygynous marriage, if it gives them access to greater resources. Polygyny may also increase the status of women in society, because it heightens the competition for wives.

With all these solid merits to its credit, Becker's book does contribute to the dangerous modern fallacy which regards society as an artificial construct made up of individuals. For analytical purposes—whether economic or biological—it is sometimes necessary to pretend that the family is a set of contractual relationships. But even from a biological perspective, the family is an organic entity made up of people closely related genetically—either directly, as in the case of brothers and sisters, parents and children, or indirectly, as with husbands and wives who have merged their identities in the persons of their children. Still, Becker's *Treatise* remains the single most important attempt to analyze the economics of family life.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

On "After the Big Bang"

I read with great interest Bryce Christensen's "Before the Big Bang" in the March 1986 issue. In what is otherwise an excellent review, I must bring your attention to a most grievous error. Mr. Christensen writes:

> After all, before then no one except Christians had believed that the physical universe appeared suddenly from nothing.

The obvious reference to Genesis as an exclusively Christian possession is startling. Jews revere and have revered Genesis as one of the five books of Moses for nearly 3,500 years, thus antedating the Christian claim by 1,500 years or so. May I assume Mr. Christensen's error is one of historical naiveté rather than insensitivity?

—*David B. Meltz*
Atlanta, Georgia

Mr. Christensen Replies:

I understand why Mr. Meltz might be offended if he thought that I was trying to expropriate Genesis as an "exclusively Christian possession." On the contrary, it is generally agreed among Old Testament scholars that the Christian doctrine *creatio ex nihilo* is an *interpretive* innovation by the early Christian fathers, and is a doctrine that is not only not spelled out in the text of Genesis but seems to contradict that text. (Don't tell the Fundamentalists this, however. They like to think that several doctrines they've borrowed from the Catholic tradition can be defended from "Scripture alone.")

Karl Rahner's *Encyclopedia of Theology* traces the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* back to "the middle of the 2nd century, as in the confession of faith in Hermas" and notes the polemical use of this doctrine in the Christian fight against Gnosticism. In the more pedestrian but accessible *Eerdmans' Handbook to Christian Belief*, James Houston observes that "the church fathers developed the notion of creation 'out of nothing' . . . [as] a form of theological shorthand to indicate that God is sovereign over creation." In his *Commentary on The Holy Scriptures*, John P. Lange argues that *creatio ex nihilo* is a specifically Christian doctrine, noting that for Aben Ezra, Rabbi Schelomo, and other "learned Jewish commentators," "creation (the Mosaic creation) is regarded as *formation* rather than as primal *origination* of matter." Lange notes that Aben Ezra specifically opposed the reading of the Genesis text to mean "the bringing out of nothing."

John Milton (who, as I noted in my review, rejected *creatio ex nihilo*) pointed out in his *Christian Doctrine* that the Hebrew text *cannot* signify "to create out of nothing." "On the contrary, these words uniformly signify to create out of matter." In his study *The Old Testament Since the Reformation*, the Christian scholar Emil G. Kraeling concedes the real possibility that "the writer of the creation story holds matter to be co-eternal with God" but adds that if this is so "we would have to reject that aspect of its presentation."

On the other hand, a careful Jewish scholar has recently pointed out to me several citations from rabbinical literature suggesting Jewish development of the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* at least as early as the early Christian fathers.

In closing, I think it fair to note that as a Latter-day Saint, I side with John Milton and with Aben Ezra in accepting the original text of Genesis on this point and rejecting *creatio ex nihilo*, despite the scientific evidences now being adduced for it. Might God have initiated the primal Bang by suddenly introducing pre-existent matter-energy (perhaps from some other dimension of being) into the time-space of our universe? I don't know. He does. And neither the latest Grand Unified Theory nor the creation account in Genesis does more than very partially bridge the gap.

On "Academic Freedom"

Please allow me to comment on your column in the Cultural Revolutions section of the January 1986 issue wherein someone states: "During the 60's and 70's, while other universities were committing academic suicide by eliminating all merely 'academic' requirements, Fordham held firm."

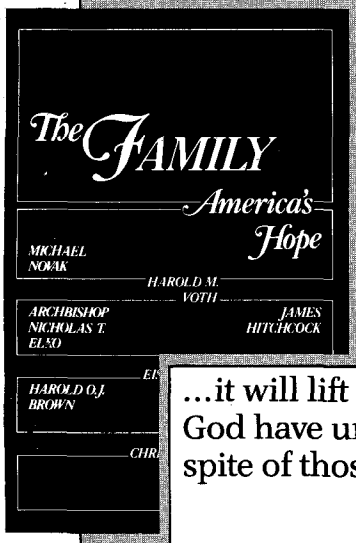
My dear sir, if Fordham held firm, then Idi Amin is a disciple of Mother Teresa. As a student at Fordham between 1965 to 1969, I can attest to the fact, more out of disgust and bitterness than sadness, that that once noble Jesuit institution became, with unimaginable ease, a nesting place for New Left activists and that it was for all practical purposes run by the SDS.

The president of the university at that time, one Leo McLaughlin, was a black-robed jellyfish more interested in importing the likes of Marshall McLuhan, Margaret Mead, Ivan Illych, *et al.*, than in "holding firm." If I am not mistaken, the good reverend has long since left the order and has married a former nun. Perhaps he, too, writes for *Screw* magazine. I would not be surprised. The only thing that does surprise me is that anyone could write that "Fordham held firm." To what?

Thomas R. Nassisi
Grand View, NY

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"For intellectual and spiritual support and reinforcement, parents will want to read



THE FAMILY

AMERICA'S HOPE

...it will lift your spirits and strengthen your determination to fulfill the role you and God have undertaken together: that of being the best parents you can possibly be in spite of those who would destroy the foundation of Western civilization."

—The Barbara M. Morris Report

This book is designed to be of assistance to parents, teachers, counselors, clergy, legislators, social service agency personnel, and others whose responsibilities affect the well-being of the family.

Eminent spokesmen for the family review the primary functions of the family, examine circumstances which inhibit those functions, propose some actions for counteracting antifamily influences, and consider some of the ways in which religion may more effectively support the family.

- "The American Family, an Embattled Institution," by Michael Novak, author and resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute
- "The Role of the Family in Nurturing the Child for Responsible Adulthood," by Harold M. Voth, M.D., senior psychiatrist and psychoanalyst at the Menninger Foundation
- "The Family as a Stabilizing Force in the Life of an Adult," by James Hitchcock, Catholic social critic and professor of history at St. Louis University
- "Modern Culture and the Norms for Intimate Relationships," by the late Leopold Tyrmand, former vice president of The Rockford Institute
- "Religion in Support of the Family—*A Jewish Commentary*," by Mayer Eisenstein, M.D., a Chicago physician, vice chairman of the American College of Home Obstetrics, and on the Council for Jewish Elderly
- "Religion in Support of the Family—*A Catholic Commentary*," by Archbishop Nicholas T. Elko, Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati
- "Religion in Support of the Family—*A Mormon Commentary*," by Joe J. Christensen, president of Ricks College and former Director of Seminaries and Institutes Worldwide of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
- "Religion in Support of the Family—*A Protestant Commentary*," by Harold O.J. Brown, chairman of the department of theology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School
- "Upholding the Principles of Family Solidarity in an Adversary Culture," by John A. Howard, president of The Rockford Institute

$4.00 ($2.50 each, 10 or more)
Published by The Rockford Institute

THE FAMILY: AMERICA'S HOPE
ORDER FORM

☐ Please send me _____ copy(s) of *The Family: America's Hope* at $4.00 plus 50¢ postage & handling each (10 or more, $2.50 each).

☐ Please send me more information about The Rockford Institute.

Name_____

Address_____

City_____

State/Zip_____

Quantity ordered _____

Amount $_____

Postage & handling $_____

TOTAL $_____

Please make check or money order payable to The Rockford Institute. ***U.S. Funds Only.***

F85/1

The Rockford Institute • 934 North Main Street • Rockford, Illinois 61103

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED